

SHAKESPEARE

UNMASKED



THE MANNERS ARMS:

Or, two bars, azure, a chief quarterly of the last, and gules; on the first and fourth, two fleurs de lis, or; on the second and third, a lion of England.



ROGER MANNERS

FIFTH EARL OF RUTLAND

*After Marcus Gheeraerts' picture of Queen Elizabeth's progress
to Blackfriars in June 1600.*

SHAKESPEARE UNMASKED

By

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"He hath deserved worthily of his country ..

Coriolanus

"let your reason see-
To make the truth appear..."

Measure for Measure

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Preface

A new book on Shakespeare needs either no preface or a very elaborate one. The author has expressed the desire that no appreciation of his work should appear in these brief lines. They are written merely for the pleasure of introducing him to his readers.

Pierre S. Porohovshikov is an old friend of mine, or more exactly, I am an old friend of his, for when we first met, I was a mere boy. Mr. Porohovshikov belongs, both by education and social connections, to the cultural élite of Russian society. He is a graduate of the University of Moscow, with its first-class diploma, the equivalent of an M.A.

He began a legal career in Moscow, was attorney general in the Russian provinces, and Judge at the High Court of Justice in St. Petersburg. A book, "The Art of Speech in Court", won for him a name among Russian lawyers and a place in literary circles. The Imperial Academy of Science bestowed upon him the Pushkin Award — the highest in its field. Gradually Mr. Porohovshikov concentrated his interests on Shakespeare, for the Shakespearean riddle has fascinated him from youth. After many years of research and thought, he now presents his solution.

Whether the reader approves, or disapproves, or makes reservations, I feel that these pages will reflect to him much of the delight — which I cannot help but envy — of the author's long and rich association with the master playwright, whose identity he believes is here revealed.

GEORGE VERNADSKY

Yale University

Author's Foreword

It is a happy duty of the writer to express fervent thanks to the generous contributors to his work. He owes particular obligation to His Grace the late Duke of Rutland, who placed at his disposal priceless family documents, hitherto unpublished, from the Library of Belvoir Castle; to Dr. J. A. Venn, President of Queen's College, Cambridge, for valuable information on the history of that College; to Dr. J. Q. Adams, Supervisor of Research of the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, for many important indications; and to Mr. John Stanley, formerly of the Library of Congress. The work in its progress constantly required various data from authentic sources and many of the references and quotations were obtained through Mr. Stanley's ever ready and untiring collaboration. The writer is equally grateful to Miss Margaret Bennett, Mr. and Mrs. Duncan Burnet of the Library of the University of Georgia, Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Goddington, Dr. and Mrs. Hal M. Davidson, the late J. Denham-Parsons, Mr. Robert England, Miss Mary Henley, Mr. Guy Hurlburt, Mr. David W. Johnston, Mr. John Knox, the late Dr. Arthur Lambert of Harrow-on-the-Hill, Mrs. Arthur Lambert, Miss Anna Matvieff, Mr. John E. Nelson, Mr. Glenn W. Rainey, Mr. William Rosenblatt, Mr. and Mrs. James O'H. Sanders, the Members of the Atlanta Shakespeare Circle, and many other friends, without whose encouragement and help this book could not have been completed.

The writer also wishes cordially to thank the artists, Mr. James M. Springer and Mr. John J. Brock, for the vivid illustrations contributed to his pages.

P. S. F.

Contents

Preface	v
Author's Foreword	vii
Introduction	xiii

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. <i>Shakespeare, Shake-speare, Shakspeare</i>	17
II. <i>The Man Behind the Plays</i>	29
III. <i>A Name</i>	47
IV. <i>A Boy</i>	59
V. <i>A Mysterious Playwright at Cambridge</i>	71
VI. <i>The Early Plays</i>	93
VII. <i>Rutland in Italy</i>	105
VIII. <i>The Birth of a Legend</i>	121
IX. <i>The Peer and the Actor</i>	135
X. <i>Hamlet</i>	155
XI. <i>In the Tower</i>	173
XII. <i>The Dark Plays</i>	193
XIII. <i>The Last Plays</i>	<u>217</u>
XIV. <i>The Case for William Shakespeare</i>	231
XV. <i>Bacon and Oxford</i>	255
XVI. <i>Conclusion</i>	271
<i>Reference Books</i>	291
<i>Appendix</i>	297
<i>Notes</i>	297

List of Illustrations

The Manners Arms	<i>Half Title</i>
Roger Manners, Fifth Earl of Rutland	<i>Frontispiece</i>
After Marcus Gheeraerts' "Visit of Queen Elizabeth to Blackfriars, June 1600" in the collection of the Earl of Manchester.	
Queen Elizabeth	127
Robert Devereux, Second Earl of Essex	175
National Portrait Gallery, London.	
The Bust in the First Folio	235
After the Droeshout engraving.	
The Monument of the Earl of Rutland and His Countess	275
In St. Mary's Church at Bottesford, Leicestershire	

FAC-SIMILES

Roger Manners' letter to his mother	61
Holograph original at Belvoir Castle	
Roger Manners' letter to his mother	63
Holograph original at Belvoir Castle	
Manuscript page of the Latin play "Machiauellus"	75
Original in the Bodleian Library, Oxford	
Roger Manners' letter to Sir Roger Manners	177
Holograph original at Belvoir Castle.	
The lines in the First Folio	234
Accompanying the bust of the alleged author.	
Part of page 156, second column, of the First Folio	237
With the text of <i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i>	
Poem quoted in <i>Twelfth Night</i> , Act II, sc. 4, First Part	273
In Roger Manners' hand; original at Belvoir Castle.	
Same Poem, Second Part	279
In Roger Manners' hand; original at Belvoir Castle.	

Introduction

"There is no mystery about Shakespeare," says a learned critic "The whole matter," says another critic, "is a great Perhaps" — "There is no mystery about Shakespeare," joins in a third eminent critic A brilliant lawyer writes, "Shakespeare is one of the most interesting yet baffling enigmas of history" A distinguished scholar asserts that by many good rules *Hamlet*, the most fascinating play of the greatest playwright of the world, 'should be counted a bad play," and another distinguished scholar adds "The problems of the text of *Hamlet* are considerable, and the problems of the play are infinite In mystery it opens and in mystery it ends"

If this motley fabric of critique and appraisal came from two opposite camps — from those who believe in the accepted tradition, on one side, and from those who reject it, on the other — it would be natural and inevitable But it happens that all statements reproduced above are quotations from the staunchest champions of the orthodox tradition of Stratford on Avon If English is English, there is much that is enigmatic and mysterious in Shakespeare

The reader will find in these pages two sets of facts: first, the literary and historical matter contained in Shakespeare's comedies, histories and tragedies, and, secondly, the story of a man's life These two sets of facts, though apparently unrelated, prove to be intimately connected with each other We read and reread the plays and we construct an outline of the poet's personality as we see him through

his works. Then we lay the book aside and we turn to the life and adventures of Roger Manners, fifth Earl of Rutland.

The apparition comes . . .
These hands are not more like.

The enigma is solved: the mysteries vanish. The man explains the plays; the plays illustrate the man's life. Whether we approach the problem from the standpoint of historical criticism, the philosophy of composition, or the mathematical theory of probability, it is logically impossible to consider the countless coincidences, not to mention the general concordance between the story of the man and the story of the plays, as purely accidental. The material conjunction is indeed slight; the logical connection unmistakable and conclusive. A piece of lace can no more be produced by accident than a spider's web. Nor can thirty-two chessmen carelessly thrown on the chessboard stand up in good order on their black and white squares. We rest on the ocean's beach on a clear night and contemplate the starlit heavens. Looking down at the same constellations at our feet, we would not ask, where are the stars that are reflected in the water.

This book offers to orthodox Shakespeareans, the believers in the Stratford tradition, an opportunity of demonstrating the truth of their creed in a simple and convincing way. They have but to answer a few plain questions under the assumption of William Shakespere's authorship. These questions are: 1. Why is Shakespeare the only writer in the history of mankind whose works are said to drive their critics into blindness, perversity or insanity? 2. Why do the plays show an amount of knowledge equal to that of the most learned men of the time? 3. Why are Shakespeare's

plays overloaded with sports' and legal terms and images? 4. Why are they not overloaded with stage terms and images? 5. Why is there rich and accurate local color in *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *The Merchant of Venice* and *Othello*, and none at all in *Much Ado about Nothing* and *Romeo and Juliet*? 6. Why were the three happy comedies of 1600 followed by the four great tragedies? 7. Why did the poet write no more after 1612? 8. Why did some contemporary writers, printers, and publishers spell the poet's name with a hyphen and others without it? 9. Why is the poet's picture in the First Folio designed with two left shoulders and two left arms? The reader will find more similar problems in the book; they might be subdivided into many more questions of detail. But even these few are sufficient to settle the dispute. The answers under Rutland's authorship are as follows:

1. The criticisms of Shakespeare and his works appear to be blind, perverse, or insane because the critics confuse two different persons, the poet and the actor. This confusion leads to contradictions and absurdities.

2. The dramas display a superior amount of knowledge because the poet was one of the best educated men of his time.

3. The dramas are overloaded with sports' and legal terms and images because hunting and hawking were the poet's constant recreations and because he studied law at different periods of his life.

4. The dramas are not overloaded with stage terms and images because the poet was not an actor.

5. There is true and accurate local color, social, geographical, and historical, in the plays set in Milan, Mantua, Padua and Venice because the poet lived in these cities when he wrote these plays or some time before; there is no local

color in *Much Ado*, set in Messina, because the poet never saw that city; there is no local color in *Romeo and Juliet*, because the poet wrote that tragedy before he traveled in Italy and visited Verona.

6. The bright comedies, *Twelfth Night*, *Much Ado about Nothing*, and *As You Like It*, were followed by the tragic *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *Macbeth* and *King Lear*, because the poet lived through public disgrace, imprisonment and ruin in the mean time between the former and the latter plays.

7. Shakespeare wrote no more after 1612 because he died in that year.

8. Contemporary writers, printers, and publishers who knew that Shakespeare was a pen-name spelled it with a hyphen; those who did not know or could not disclose the secret spelled it in one undivided word.

9. The engraving in the First Folio has two left shoulders and arms because it is not a portrait of the poet, but a hoax.

Truth is stronger than error. The champions of the tradition of Stratford are millions, their standard-bearers — devoted, learned and bold, and this book is no Gorgon head to turn them into stone. If their answers are better than ours, truth is with them; they will vindicate William Shakespere and at the same time achieve a splendid victory over the heresy advocated in these pages. If not, or if they desert their colors and evade the test, their cause is lost: Shakespere is not Shakespeare.

Chapter I.

Shakespeare, Shake-speare, Shakspere

"There is no mystery about Shakespeare"

-- Nelson and Thorndyke

"Shakespeare's life is a fine mystery."

-- Charles Dickens

"The exploration of the Shakespeare Mystery is one of the most fascinating detective stories."

— Gilbert Slater

Some strange confessions of orthodox Shakespeareans — Personal characteristics of the poet — Mysteries in Shakespeare — The poet's idiosyncrasies — Shakespeare and other great dramatists — Orthodox pictures of Shakspeare and Shake-speare — The problem.

GREAT poets, as all great men, are the torch-bearers — their works, the lights of humanity. Why should Shakespeare, the greatest of poets, spread mist and confusion around him?

"Thousands and thousands of books are written on Shakespeare," says an American writer, "and most of them are mad." An eminent professor of Harvard complains of "the blind and naive perversity of three-quarters of our Shakespearean criticisms." Can we imagine a blind man discussing Van Dyke or Veronese, or an astronomer looking for the Dipper in the basement of the Empire Building in

New York? Shakespeare was a genius, but these absurdities do not follow from the fact. We do not turn perverse, insane or blind from reading Dante, Milton, Molière, Goethe, or Pushkin. Why should Shakespeare drive us into a lunatic asylum? And it is remarkable and significant that we find equally trenchant assertions among English Shakespeareans. A professor of Cambridge deplores their looking at the Shakespeare plays through the wrong end of the biographical telescope; another denounces baffling tongues, fretful pens and heads that cannot hold an even course in thinking of the poet. A professor of Oxford writes: "There is no book, except the Bible, which has been so misread, so misapplied or made the subject of so many idle paradoxes and ingenuities as Shakespeare's dramas and sonnets." Another English critic echoes: "Books like the Bible and Shakespeare attract madmen to be their commentators." And so on.

These are neither hysterical outcries of literary anarchists, nor vagaries of half-learned amateurs. The words are quoted from George L. Kittredge, J. Dover-Wilson, Sir Edmund Chambers, Prof. Sir Walter Raleigh and other scholars of similar authority. Their strange assertions arrest the critically alert Shakespeare lover and suggest that there must be some cardinal wrong, some poisonous dram in the great works or their author, or perhaps in our association of the works with their supposed author. And it may be said that such notions are more widely infiltrated into the public than is apparent on the surface. The Shakespeare legend is not so sacrosanct today as it has been for almost three centuries. A few years ago an English scholar published, under the title "Seven Shakespeares", a survey of the old tradition in relation to the lives of six contemporaries of William Shakspeare the actor. This essay shows that

every one of these six Elizabethans may have had a part in the creation of the great works.'

The chameleonic aspect of the case, confronted with the strange admissions above quoted, imposes on modern historians and critics the obligation to meet the problems and weigh the evidence. Insane or sound, orthodox Shakespeareans have collected an imperishable wealth of facts and have discussed these facts from many angles. We shall test their creed by their own writings. If we find the legend supported by facts and logic, we shall bow to it. If we find that Shakespeare wore a mask, we shall endeavor to unmask him. We know that the poet called himself Shakespeare and often spelled his name with a hyphen — Shake-speare, and that the actor signed his will, Shakspeare.

One of the latest outlines of the poet as man and artist is Prof. J. Dover-Wilson's brilliant essay, *The Essential Shakespeare*. The poet, as seen by Professor Wilson, was a man of rare social accomplishments; quite familiar with the manners and the speech of aristocratic undergraduates, court gallants, and inns-of-court men; a keen sportsman, equally expert in hunting and in hawking; a traveler on the continent; a lover of music; an enthusiastic advocate of the adventurous and conquering spirit of his country, living in the very heart of his time. He was a cool admirer of Queen Elizabeth; a loyal, if reserved, subject of James I, and an intimate friend of two noblemen, the Earl of Southampton and the Earl of Essex. The fact that this character sketch corresponds to earlier images conceived of the poet by other orthodox writers gives it convincing historical value. It is also precisely the picture which materializes before us, plain, blunt lovers of the drama, behind Benedick, Valentine, and Hamlet. And it is indeed remarkable and significant that

this excellent likeness of the poet is quite unlike anything that we know about Shakspeare of Stratford, and that Prof. Dover-Wilson, who is a staunch champion of the old tradition, has so clearly demonstrated its perfect absurdity.

The poet was a *scholar*. "It is possible," says Sir Walter Raleigh, "to make a long catalogue of the books he read or consulted. He read all the classics; the poems and love-pamphlets and plays of the university wits; the tracts and dialogues in the prevailing taste; and there is hardly in that age of pamphlets, one that the student can read with the certainty that Shakespeare has not read it before him. Some books he ransacked from cover to cover for the material of his plays. These books he must have owned." Churton Collins, Sir Sidney Lee, J. Q. Adams, and others assert, independently of one another, the same conclusions from the facts.

The poet was a *courtier*. All orthodox Shakespeareans agree that the poet had not only patrons but also intimate friends among the highest nobility of the land: the Earl and Countess of Essex, the Earl and Countess of Southampton, the brothers Pembroke, their mother, the Dowager Countess of Pembroke, Lady Penelope Rich, the Earl and Countess of Rutland.

The poet was a *sportsman*. "The chase was a passion with him as music." Sir Walter Raleigh writes, "There can be no doubt that Shakespeare was minutely acquainted with all the lore of the field-sports—the hare and the stag, and the capture of smaller game by the falcon." D. H. Madden, vice-chancellor of the University of Dublin, says, "Allusions to horses and falconry welled up spontaneously from the poet's inmost soul."

The poet was a *lawyer*. A commentator writes, "The

total effect of the numerous legal references in the poems and plays leads irresistibly to the conclusion that the technical language of the law is *an ingrained and ineradicable part of his vocabulary and his thought*, and could have only been acquired in the way of regular study as an apprentice of the law." Numerous other authorities write in the same vein. It should be mentioned, however, that these remarks are half-confirmed, half whiffed off by a simple and comprehensive formula newly discovered by an English scholar, Mr. John Bailey: "Shakespeare knew everything about the law, without having been a lawyer."

The poet was a *traveler*. C. C. Creighton, J. Brown, Karl and Theodor Elze, Gregor Sarrazin, and others express amazement at his knowledge of Italian life, public and private; the laws and customs of the country; its ceremonies and characteristics,—all agreeing that the very atmosphere is as Italian as it can be. According to Mr. Yan Steffanson, a Danish critic, 'it is sheer impossibility that Shakespeare could have had the knowledge of the Castle of Elsinore he displays in *Hamlet* from any kind of books of that time in England'.

We may add two more characteristics. A careful commentator, H. G. Ruggles, has noted that "*All's Well that Ends Well* is largely infused with terms borrowed from mechanics, engineering, and military art. Professor Dover-Wilson asserts: "The plays are drenched with sea spray and shot with the colored thread of mariners' tales." This last trait is confirmed by Mr. John Bailey in the same oracular and comprehensive formula as above: "Shakespeare knew all about the sea without ever having set foot on a ship."

So Shakespeare was a scholar, a courtier, a lawyer; a lover of horses and hounds and hawks; of books and mu-

sic; a traveler; seemingly also a soldier and a sailor. And such indeed is the personality projected by his plays. But at the same time we are faced with the fact that, despite their utmost efforts, our critics are unable to show that the popular London actor, William Shakspeare, ever saw Queen Elizabeth or King James I, except across the footlights; or stepped into a court of law or an inn of court; ever had a book or a *viola de gamba* or a cross-bow in his hand; a brace of hounds on his leash or a falcon on his glove; ever went to war or saw a brigantine or a galley except on the Thames. Nor, so far as contemporary evidence may suggest, ever so much as touched the sleeve of such men as Southampton and Essex. Yet he has to be the man who was and did all that.

We must pause here. For, with all due respect to tradition and authority, we cannot blink at this extraordinary convergence of negative evidence. History shakes her head and raises a warning finger. And we are reminded of the ominous confession of the writers we have quoted on our first page: naively perverse, blind, mad.... Their words, not ours.

There is another, less alarming, but not less significant element in Shakespeare. The more he is read and studied, the less he is understood. Scholars who have explored and analyzed his works find more and more problems and inexplicable difficulties in them, and every step reveals a new mystery. This is the more remarkable and puzzling when we consider that there are no such difficulties in other great dramatists and poets. We see none in Ibsen, Byron, Goethe, Corneille, Lope de Vega; nor (and what is more noteworthy) in Shakespeare's contemporaries. We

may quote a few English and American scholars, all of them strictly orthodox.

Charles Dickens wrote: "Shakespeare's life is a fine mystery and I tremble every day lest something should turn up"; James M. Beck, former attorney general of the U. S., — "Shakespeare is one of the most interesting yet baffling enigmas of history"; George Saintsbury — "The whole matter is a great Perhaps". We wonder, why? There are many allegorical, fantastic, mystical dramas in the world's literature, yet none of them are wrapped in an impenetrable fog of mysteries. Why should Shakespeare be a mystery? Genius is as simple as it is grand.

The doubly incongruous aspect of the poet and his works suggests the question, Is there no possible connection between these unnatural mysteries and the unnatural insanity confessed by our critics? It seems reasonable that if we look at things not naively, not perversely, not insanely, we may come nearer the truth. We may find no mysteries and no problems at all.

We have seen that Shakespeare's students have observed in his dramas two strange idiosyncrasies, — an ever present obsession with two sides of life — the sports and the law. This obsession is so strong as often to impair the virtue of his masterpieces.

In his admirable book *The Diary of Master William Silence*, Vice-Chancellor Madden gives us a series of pictures illustrating the poet's extraordinary knowledge of field sports. "As my work progressed," he says, "I discerned more and more clearly the true nature of Shakespeare's allusions to field sports and horses and how they for the most part welled up spontaneously from the poet's inmost soul, and are seldom suggested by the character in hand at the

moment, with which they are often out of keeping." This is quite exceptional and therefore more remarkable by itself. But it becomes infinitely more significant when the writer tells us that, as he became better acquainted with the works of Shakespeare's contemporaries, it was "more and more evident . . . that this peculiar mode of thought was not shared by other dramatic writers of his age". The truth of these remarks is recognized by all our critics. Let us note here a few instances to illustrate the point.

How, may we ask, does a king incite or bribe men to murder? If anybody knew it, Shakespeare did.

K John. Good Hubert, Hubert, Hubert, throw thine eye
On yon young boy I'll tell thee what, my friend,
He is a very serpent in my way;
And wherso'e'r this foot of mine doth tread,
He lies before me Dost thou understand me?
Thou art his keeper

Hubert. And I'll keep him so
That he shall not offend your Majesty

K John. Death.

Hubert My lord?

K. John. A grave

Hubert He shall not live

K. John. Enough.

The poet kept his mind under control, and not the tiniest superfluous drop of ink ran down his pen. After ten years of dramatic practice, we read in *Macbeth*.

Macbeth Do you find
Your patience so predominant in your nature
That you can let this go? Are you so gosselled
To pray for this good man and for his issue,
Whose heavy hand hath bow'd you to the grave
And beggar'd yours for ever?

First Mur.

We are men, my liege.

Macbeth.

Ay, in the catalogue you go for men,
 As hounds and greyhounds, mongrels, spaniels, curs,
 Sloughs, water-rugs, and demi-wolves are clipt
 All by the name of dogs. The valued file
 Distinguishes the swift, the slow, the subtle,
 The housekeeper, the hunter, every one
 According to the gift which bounteous nature
 Hath in him clos'd; whereby, *etc.*

What has this dog-show catalogue to do with Fleance and Banquo? The poet was careless, and his thoughts ran into the accustomed ruts of his idiosyncrasy. Instead of heightening the tension of the scene, these lines can only cool and weaken it. And if we read the plays carefully, we are surprised at the number of similar esthetic blunders resulting from this curious peculiarity of the poet's mind. The following passage will show the other feature of his seemingly unaccountable idiosyncrasy—the law. Bolingbroke's rebellion has driven King Richard II to Barkloughby Castle in Wales. He is informed that the people in England are rising against him and favoring his rebellious vassal.

K. Richard.

Of comfort no man speak.

Let's talk of worms, of graves, and epitaphs;
 Make dust our paper and with rainy eyes
 Write sorrow on the bosom of the earth.

The first line is excellent; the others poor, artificial, and weak. The next two images are jarring notes:

Let's choose *executors* and talk of *ulls*...

A pedant or a miser might, but no king would talk like that. A passage in *Richard III* is equally significant: The two queens, Margaret and Elizabeth, and the Duchess of

York are bewailing the loss of their kinsmen, murdered by the former Duke of Gloucester, now King Richard III:

Q. Elizabeth. My words are dull. O, quicken them with thine.

Q. Margaret. Thy woes will make them sharp and pierce like mine.

Duchess. Why should calamity be full of words?

Q. Elizabeth. Windy attorneys to their clients' woes,
Airy successors to intestate joys
Poor breathing orators of miseries, . . .

There is poetry here, but more, and too much, law. It would be natural for Shakspeare, actor, theatre factotum, and quick money-maker, to think in stage slang or in pounds, shillings, and pence. But that his mind should be saturated beyond normal capacity with sports and law; that in his head horses, hounds, stags, and hares should whirl in a wild, incessant tarantella to the tune of fees-simple, survivorships, forfeitures, and perpetuities is against nature. On the other hand, if he had that irrepressible idiosyncrasy, that constant urge to think and write of things entirely outside his daily concern and intercourse, how is it that, living at the stage, on the stage, from the stage, he never used his professional speech in the same way? Why did stage speech and slang not ooze from his pen on "all occasions, appropriate and inappropriate"? Why did not allusions to the playhouse "well up spontaneously from his innermost soul"? A strange genius. His active and all-embracing mind will not approach spontaneously the things of his daily toils and cares, and he cannot write prose or poetry without running into forms of speech which he hardly ever hears around him and never uses himself in those daily cares and toils. Indeed, it is not a genius; it is something that cannot be.

Our common sense recoils before it. How is it that our lynx-eyed orthodox critics fail to see this? But we forget that they are not Argus-eyed. Dr. Kittredge has told us that they are naively perverse and blind.

Shakespeare, we are told, was an actor. What kind of men and women do we meet among the hundreds of characters in the plays? Kings, queens, princesses, doctors, parsons, executioners, bawds, nuns, courtesans; soothsayers, jailers, poets, tailors, sailors, soldiers, judges, schoolmasters, witches, maids of honor, pimps; jesters, lawyers, murderers, by dozens. One profession only is represented but once — the supposed author's profession. We find in the whole pageant but one actor — the First Player in *Hamlet*, and he not a man of flesh and blood, but a mere puppet, a marionette, nodding to magnificent tirades on dramatic art by the princely amateur. Yet our best critics affirm that it was himself that Shakespeare painted in his dramas. They have written many learned and brilliant books; and they are good painters too. They have painted the poet *cap-à-pié* in vivid colors — a refined gentleman, richly apparalled, a jeweled dagger on his hangings and a long rapier on his belt; with shelves of books in the background and a cap and gown thrown on the chair on which he rests his gloved hand. And Shakspeare of Stratford tallies no more with that picture than the tiny palm of a midget fits into a giant's gauntlet.

But then, if not Shakspeare the actor, who was the poet? He kept his visor down. Can we raise it? Of course, we can. With all due respect to authority and learning, we should not bend to them against our sound reason. Orthodox writers confess: "We are idolaters of Shakespeare" (Raleigh); "We cannot think our own thoughts about Shakespeare; we are unconscious inheritors of a vast array of preconceived ideas

— good and bad, clever and stupid, judicious and fantastic, ... we cannot shuffle off our ancestry." (Kittredge); our minds 'cannot hold an even course' (Chambers). This is unfortunately too true when our scholars write about Shakespeare of Stratford, and this is the root of all the confusion, the misunderstandings and misinterpretations, in the biographical chapters of orthodox books. But, apart from that, this academic humility is groundless. It is inconceivable that men of sound and trained minds should be unable to exercise their sound judgment and discard from their ratiocination what is contrary to fact, or supernatural, or stupid. The effort is not half as hard as that required of an old smoker to drop his pipe. As soon as this is realised, our cloistered mind is free and our thoughts swift and sure as a good archer's arrows.

Chapter II.

The Man Behind the Plays

The restoration of Shakespeare's personality "is akin to the restoration of the trail, acts, and person of the criminal from the quality of his cigar ashes".

— William Tenney Brewster

"Such clues are separately slight, but collectively suggestive"

-- Rt. Hon J M Robertson

A brief survey of the plays — Indications of classic and forensic learning — Woodcraft and jargonry — Recurrence of the same plot in several plays — Probable sojourns in Italy and Denmark — Apparent connection of the poet with Essex and Southampton — Presumable identification marks of the poet

CRAFTY murderers wear gloves and leave no fingerprints; but poets are careless and often do. How would the case stand if no name had ever been attached to the plays? We shall cast a glance at Shakespeare's works, assuming resolutely that we know nothing about the author. Here are the dramas; somebody wrote them. What do they tell us about the writer? We will accept any indication, any allusion, any possible hint. We shall perceive in this brief survey not a few enigmatic circumstances and give our particular atten-

tion to them. The venture is very much like a detective story to which we have to write the last chapter. Our special object will be to discover: a) what is the poet's own in the plays, that is, what has he altered or added to the original stories; b) what in these alterations is unusual, odd, eccentric; and more particularly, c) what seems to have no reasonable explanation. The knotty points are the real clues.

We must note, first of all, that the name William Shakespeare first appeared in print as that of the author of two poems, *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece*, and that these two poems were dedicated to the Earl of Southampton. They have been described as two ice-boxes. This is not only very strange, but most emphatically significant. It might be said that *Hamlet* is written with gall and tears; *Lear* — in thunder and lightning; *Othello* — with fire, and *Macbeth* with blood. But it is hard to believe that the poet who wrote these tragedies would write on ice. And in fact, reading carefully, we find that both these poems are signed: Francis Bacon.

The First Part of K. Henry VI, produced in London in 1590 at the Rose theatre, was written in collaboration by three or four, perhaps even five dramatists. It contains only one scene from Shakespeare's pen, which was added to it several years after its first performance—the famous Temple Gardens scene of the origin of the War of the Roses. It offers to the critic an interesting literary problem. The drama presents a series of events of the Hundred Years War, introducing King Henry VI's generals fighting with poor forces against Joan of Arc to hold for England the French provinces conquered by the valiant Henry V. The stage directions to the Roses scene are brief: "*Enter Richard Plantagenet, Warwick, Somersets, Poole and others.*" It appears from

the dialogue that the Earl of Suffolk, Vernon, and an unnamed lawyer are among those others. We read:

- Rich.* Great lords and gentlemen, what means this silence? . . .
Let him that is a true-born gentleman,
And stands upon the honour of his birth,
If he suppose that I have pleaded truth,
From off this briar pluck a white Rose with me.
- Som.* Let him that is no coward nor no flatterer
But dare maintain the party of the truth,
Pluck 'a red Rose from off this thorne with me

Who are these "great lords and gentlemen"? They are neither statesmen nor party leaders nor valiant soldiers, as we would expect after the preceding episodes in the drama. They are hot-headed young students of law. "Shakespeare," says a learned critic, "brilliantly imagines the quarrel of the Roses to have started among a group of young aristocrats studying law in the Temple." We would not accept this remark unreservedly. Taken by itself, the scene is a charming picture. But taken as part of a theatrical play, it is, most assuredly, a grievous fault. The fundamental principle of dramatic composition is that every incident must be conducive to the main story, or, if there are more stories than one, to some one of these. There are but two stories in the play. One is the fight between the King of England and the French King for the sovereignty over half of France, with the fierce battles between their armies led by Talbot and by Joan of Arc; the other, the rivalry of political factions in England. The Temple Garden scene has no relation to these two stories, and from the standpoint of dramatic composition is as much out of place in *Henry VI* as it would be in *Hamlet* or *Coriolanus*. The charm of the picture cannot

compensate for the technical blunder: the prettier it is, the heavier the offense against the cardinal rule of unity of action. The key note to the whole drama is given in the very first lines:

Awake, awake, English Nobilitie
Cropt are the Flower-de-Luces in your Armes
Of England's Coat one halfe is cut away.

In one of the following scenes we read

Hark, countrymen! either renew the fight,
Or tear the Lions out of England's coat!

The interest and excitement of the spectators is divided between the British Lions and the Flower-de-Luces which are Paris, Rheims, Gizors, Poitiers. Two thirds of Henry the Fifth's conquests are gone. Will they be recovered or will the wondrous creature, saint or devil's dam, wrench them from England after a century of victories? In this suspense and anxiety, a new group of Englishmen step forth on the stage — not to discuss the plans and chances of war, but to quarrel over birthrights of which nobody will think before half a century. It is hard to find a heavier outrage in the history of dramatic composition. And the esthetic blunder is doubly strange in that the discussion is carried on not between soldiers or statesmen, but between four young aristocrats studying law in the Temple. We can think but of one plausible explanation of this incongruous conceit — the poet was a nobleman and a lawyer himself.

In the Second Part of King Henry VI the King, Queen Margaret, the Duke of Gloucester, Cardinal Beaufort and Suffolk appear on the stage with *falconers ballowing*.

- Q. Mar.* Believe me, lords, for flying at the brook,
I saw no better sport these seven years day;
Yet, by your leave, the wind was very high;
And, ten to one, old Joan had not gone out.
And what a pitch she flew above the rest! . . .
- King.* But what a point, my Lord, your *falcon* made,
And what a *pitch* she flew above the rest:
To see how God in all his creatures works,
Yea, man and birds are fain to be aloft.
- Suff.* No marvel, an it like your Majesty,
My Lord' Protector's *hawks* do tower so well . . .

The sport is carried on through the whole scene. We read at the end:

- King.* Why, how now, Uncle Gloucester?
Glost. Talking of *hawking*; nothing else, my Lord . . .

This picture reminds us of the Temple Garden scene in the First Part of the Trilogy, when Somerset challenges the Earl of Warwick to decide the issue between York and Lancaster. The future Kingmaker retorts with a smile:

Between two *hawks*, which flies a higher *pitch*,
Between two dogs, which has the deeper mouth, . . .
I have perhaps some shallow judgment . . .

In the *Third Part of King Henry VI* we find a scene presenting an episode not found in Holinshed or in Hall, the usual sources of the poet's information. This scene, as we shall see later, is the golden key to the author's real name. Edward Plantagenet has landed in England with his army and, having proclaimed himself king, is marching on London. King Henry calls a war council. Warwick, Somerset, Oxford, Exeter and Montague are present.

War. What counsel, lords? Edward from Belgia,
With hasty *Germans* and blunt *Hollanders*,
Hath passed in safety through the Narrow Seas . . .

All this scene is poetic invention. But Warwick's speech suggests a historical fact — the presence of foreign soldiers in Edward Plantagenet's army. Is this also fiction, or not? And if not, where did the poet discover the fact?

In this part of the Trilogy, as in the first two, we also find an image from *falconry*:

War. Neither the King, nor he that loves him best,
The prowdest he that holds up Lancaster,
Dares *stir a wing*, when Warwick *shakes his bells*.

In *Henry IV* one figure dominates all the other actors — Falstaff. He has such vigorous, exuberant vitality, is so true to the poorer half of miserable humanity, that we instinctively feel he must have had his original in Elizabeth's London. Who may that have been?

Henry V represents war in its noblest aspect. There is in the play a friendly allusion to the Earl of Essex who was not then in favor with the Queen (Gower's harangue between Act II and Act III). A whole scene is written half in English and half in excellent French. Our inference is that the poet was at heart, if not in action, a soldier; that he knew French; and that he was a well-wisher of Essex. But why should he offer refined French to his English audience who could only swear in French, — if they could?

Love's Labours Lost is the poorest among the plays of the First Folio. It has no plot, no action, no personality in the actors. There are numerous and varied allusions to Francis Bacon in the text, plainly attributing to him the authorship of the comedy.

In *Two Gentlemen of Verona* the heroine, Julia, is deserted by her lover Proteus. They are happily reconciled and married at the end of the play. So are another pair, Valentine and Sylvia. The action is in Milan and in the neighborhood of Mantua. There are distinct touches of Lombardian topography in the action and the dialogue. We find no fingerprints, but there is one word, one name of a city, which is the poet's handmark. One of the servants of the two gentlemen unexpectedly meets the other in Milan. The First Folio had:

Launce, by mine honesty, welcome to *Padua*.

An apparently unaccountable penslip. But it is precisely the unaccountable that we have to account for.

An American playwright, staging his play between New York, Chicago and San Francisco, might in a careless moment confuse the names and write San Francisco for New York or New York for Chicago. But he would not write New Orleans, because his mind would be concentrated on the other three cities. No more would Shakespeare, writing in London about Milan, Mantua and Verona, write Padua instead of Milan. And yet the poet did write Padua. Why?

The Merchant of Venice is so rich in local color and displays such intimate knowledge of the city's topography and of Italian life, that the simplest conclusion would be to admit frankly that the poet lived in Venice when he wrote the play. "There lies over this drama an inimitable and decidedly Italian atmosphere and fragrance," says Karl Elze. According to Ch. A. Brown, "Shakespeare might have learned in London each one of the numerous characteristically Italian details, but their totality borders on the miracu-

lous." With these and other orthodox writers, we will say: the poet most probably lived or traveled in Italy at the time or before he wrote *The Merchant of Venice*.

The story of Antonio and Shylock is taken from a novella of Ser Giovanni Fiorentino, *Il Pecorone*. Shakespeare's text is in many lines a literal translation of the Italian original, but we note a curious circumstance. In the Italian story the heroine comes to the unhappy merchant's trial with instructions from an old lawyer from Bologna. Portia comes to Venice with instructions from old Bellario of Padua. There is nothing to account for this substitution of one old lawyer for another and, as nothing happens without cause in this world, we ask, Why?

In *The Taming of the Shrew* we again find what is particularly valuable to us — the poet's stamp on another man's composition. Shakespeare's play is founded on a very crude anonymous comedy published in 1594 under the title of *The Taming of a Shrew*. This comedy is placed in Athens, but has not a speck of Greece, ancient or contemporary, in the background or the dialogue. With no apparent reason for the change, Shakespeare transplanted the action to the city of Padua, and his comedy is as rich in genuine Italian color as *The Merchant of Venice* itself. Moreover, it is said to breathe the air of Padua University. Why should it be Padua and not Bury St. Edmunds, or Windsor, or Stratford on Avon? And why Padua of all Italian cities? And why a college atmosphere in the play with nothing of college life in the action? The play abounds in pictures and unerringly accurate terms of woodcraft, horsemanship, hunting and hawking. We ask ourselves, in turn, was the poet a falconer, a forrester, a deer-driver, a warrener, or a deer-stealer; a cross-bow man, a stable boy, a blacksmith; a horse dealer

or a horse stealer; or all this, besides being an actor and a playwright. We read in the delightful first skirmish between Petruccio and Catherine: "I did but praise thee, sweet Kate," — she has just given him a sound box on the ear — "when I called thee a haggard. God forbid that I should have wedded an eyass." What is a haggard? What an eyass? Let Petruccio explain: "I have observed that they which be wildest of nature, are often the easiest tamed, and, when tamed, are the most loving. What can be wilder than the raven or the haggard of the rock?" The haggard is a wild bird; an eyess or eyas — a nestling taken from the eyrie to be reared.

Much Ado about Nothing is again cast in the playwright's favorite mould. The place is Sicily, and the characters are partly Italians, partly Englishmen. Hero, loving and true, is slandered by intriguers; her lover, hot-headed Claudio, repudiates her. At the end of the play her innocence is recognized, and they are happily married. But Shakespeare introduced in the story two new characters, Benedick and Beatrice, who fascinate the reader's attention and relegate the original pair into faded neutral-tints. There are woman characters as wonderful and as attractive as Beatrice in some other Shakespeare pieces; but Benedick is painted with so rich and so vivid a brush that all other Shakespeare's *jeunes premiers* wane into the commonplace as compared with him. We feel, as most critics do, that Benedick must be no other than Shakespeare himself. The action of the comedy is in Messina, Sicily, and Benedick is a valiant soldier in the army of Don Pedro of Arragon. Why does Beatrice call him Signior Benedick of Padua?

In *Measure for Measure* Juliet is with child by Claudio who wishes to marry her, but is sent to prison and

condemned to death by Angelo, the cruel deputy of the Duke of Vienna. Angelo himself has deserted a maiden to whom he was betrothed. In reading the play carefully, we find a puzzling line in the text. "I will presently to St. Luke's," says Duke Vincentio. — There is no St. Luke's church in the drama. Why should it be St. Luke's of all names? The answer is that this name slipped under the poet's pen from another play. St. Luke's is the church in which Bianca is married to Lucenzo in *The Taming of the Shrew*. — "The old priest at St. Luke's church is at your command at all hours To th' church. Take a priest, the clerk, and some sufficient witnesses" This was a real church and is shown on a map of the city of Padua in Braun's *Civitates Orbis Terrarum*. But the action is not in Italy; it is in Vienna, Austria. Why should the poet think of *Padua*?

Padua, Padua, Padua, Padua And in each case there was no Padua in the original story. It was the poet who introduced the city in his pages. Why?

The subject of *Romeo and Juliet* is taken from a novella of Bandello which was introduced in the well-known *Histoires Tragiques* of François de Belleforest. There is no falconry in these stories, yet Juliet calls from her balcony:

Hist, Romeo, hist. O, for a falconer's voice
To lure this tassel-gentle back again!

We find in the glossary that a tercel (corrupted into *tassel*) is a hawk. But why *gentle*? Because the male hawk was believed to be smaller than the female bird. "Hist" was the falconer's call to the hawk. In two lines, four hawking

terms. Shakespeare must have been a falconer. Or did he write books on falconry?

We find no direct indications of the poet's identity in *Titus Andronicus*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *The Merry Wives of Windsor*.

Twelfth Night is recognized by the critics as "the plainest of all proofs of Shakespeare's intimate and personal experience in music". There is also, in *Twelfth Night*, salt water, salt waves, *the rude sea's enraged and foamy mouth*; a *salt-water thief* on a baubling vessel, black in the smoke of battle, capturing one man-of-war and boarding another. Shakespeare loved music, the sea and the wars.

(*As You Like It* is a delightful pastorate set in the Forest of Arden, where the banished Duke and his friends live "like old Robin Hood of England". It is however not less puzzling than charming, and we must give it more careful scrutiny. The hero, Orlando, is brave, generous and not a little sentimental, but on the whole rather a sketch than a finished picture. The heroine, Rosalind, is a second Beatrice. Only, while Beatrice is pink, red, crimson, scarlet, incarnadine, and all fire, Rosalind who also carries "a war of white and red within her cheeks", seems to be colored with pastels and is ironically cool. It is an exceptional feature of the comedy that this time the author wears two, if not three masks: Orlando (according to some critics), Jaques and Touchstone, — a rare instance of such Protean incarnation on the stage. Shakespeare speaks through Jaques and Touchstone. These two are both gentlemen; both good natured sceptics, but very different from one another. Touchstone wears motley; Jaques is prepared to be invested in it; Touchstone is garrulous, Jaques is taciturn; Touchstone is active and quick, Jaques contemplative and indolent; Touch-

stone gives us no information about himself; Jaques is less reticent, but in a somewhat cryptic vein. This is what he tells us: "I have neither the scholar's melancholy, which is emulation; nor the musician's, which is fantastical; nor the courtier's, which is proud; nor the soldier's, which is ambitious; nor the lawyer's, which is politic; nor the lady's, which is nice; nor the lover's, which is all these; but it is a melancholy of mine own, compound of many simples, extracted from so many subjects, and indeed the sundry contemplation of my travels, in which my often rumination wraps me in a most humorous sadness." This is priceless. Jaques the melancholist is no imaginary person. He is the poet's self portrait. We are here indirectly but unmistakably informed that the poet was a scholar, a musician, a courtier, a soldier, a lawyer and a traveler, which is precisely what we gathered from the other plays and what all critics, orthodox or sceptic, have always recognized as the unavoidable result of their researches.

We note that the three bright comedies, *Much Ado about Nothing*, *As You Like It* and *Twelfth Night*, each one ending in two happy marriages, are assigned by the common opinion of all orthodox critics to the same time, 1599-1600. Could the poet himself have been married at that time?

The action of *All's Well that Ends Well* is in France and in Tuscany. Some scraps of French are introduced in the dialogue. Bertram deserts Helena, but is eventually compelled to marry her. We have met with similar situations in *Two Gentlemen of Verona* and in *Much Ado*. Shakespeare created in *All's Well that Ends Well* a beautiful character not to be found in the Italian source of the play

— the Countess of Roussillion, Bertram's Mother. This noble figure is infinitely more life-like and more attractive than the solemn and grandiloquent Volumnia, the hero's mother in *Coriolanus*. Is this pure fiction, or was the picture drawn from life?

No plays appeared in 1601 and 1602. Why?

The next year, 1603, Londoners read the first Quarto of *Hamlet*. The second Quarto was published in 1604. This drama would require more than a page even for a brief summary of the clues in it and we must reserve them for a later chapter. Here we shall note but two important indications. First—*Hamlet* marks a sudden and radical alteration in the poet's disposition: high spirits and radiant *joie de vivre* are changed into deep dejection and pessimism. Secondly — the tragedy is so rich in local Danish color that unless we perversely prefer the unnatural to the natural and the incredible to the reasonable, we are compelled to admit that Shakespeare must have visited Denmark and the royal castle of Elsinore before he wrote the play. A Danish critic, Yan Steffanson, wrote: "The author of *Hamlet* shows in the drama a correct knowledge of Danish names, words and customs of his time — nay, a local knowledge of the royal castle of Elsinore, which he could not have derived from books." Also, as nothing happens without cause in this world, we must assume that the poet lived through some grave moral calamity between 1600 and 1603.

(Of all the plays of the First Folio *Macbeth* is the most objective, most concentrated and most condensed in style. We would not expect carelessness and, through that very carelessness, revealing images in the text. And yet, hinting at Banquo and his son's nearing fate, *Macbeth* utters:

They are assailable.
 Then be thou jocund. Ere the bat hath flown
 His *cloistered* flight . . .

there will be done
 A deed of dreadful note. ~)

Macbeth, III, 2.

More than a century ago an English critic, George Stevens, wrote on these lines: "The bats wheeling round the dim cloisters of *Queen's College, Cambridge*, have frequently impressed on me the singular propriety of this original epithet." It may be said today, these were prophetic impressions.

There is a very curious line in *King Lear*. The King compares Regan to Goneril:

'Tis not in thee
 To grudge my pleasures, to cut off my train,
 To bandy hasty words, to *scant my sizes* . . .

A sizar in Cambridge was a needy student who got his meals free at his college butlery. So the legendary king of Britain likens himself to a famished undergraduate of a university founded more than a thousand years after his death — an incongruous image, and therefore the more suggestive. Who but a fellow of *Cambridge University* would let King Lear jabber Cambridge college slang?

Othello again reminds us of Venice. R. L. Eagle, a commentator, wrote: "The first act of *Othello* is thoroughly Venetian in spirit . . . all is admirably conceived to picture forth one full night in Venice."

The three Roman tragedies, *Julius Caesar*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, and *Coriolanus* display, according to all critics, careful study and marvelous accuracy in classic history. We

should notice, *en passant*, a curious exception to the rule. Plutarch's figure of Julius Caesar is materially and strangely altered in Shakespeare's tragedy. The lofty speeches of the dictator are exaggerated to ridicule, his human foibles distorted into childishness. This is a very remarkable circumstance. Shakespeare could nourish no animosity against Caesar sixteen hundred years after Caesar's death. Some critics have ventured the suggestion that the pompous and uneasy, vacillating Imperator might be a cruel, but not untrue picture of Elizabeth of England in her last years, drawn by no loving hand. "It was one of Elizabeth's characteristics," writes Agnes Strickland, "that she had much difficulty in coming to a decision on any point; and when she had formed a resolution, she frequently changed her mind and, after much of that sort of childish wavering of purpose, would return to her original decision." But why should Shakespeare expose his sovereign to public ridicule?

We find nothing to guide us to the poet's identity in *Troilus and Cressida*, *Timon of Athens* and *Henry VIII*.

The last plays — the three romantic dramas — suggest that, after the great tragedies, a time came when the poet, if not happy, must at least have adopted a less bitter attitude towards the disappointments and the sorrows of life. This spirit of reconciliation with men and with fate is reflected in *The Winter's Tale*, in *Cymbeline* and in *The Tempest*. We will reserve the literary analysis of these plays to a later chapter, but a remarkable circumstance should be noted here. The last of Shakespeare's works, *The Tempest*, seems to have been performed at Court in 1611. Up to this time, only sixteen dramas had appeared in print in separate quartos. Twelve years later, the Folio of 1623 first revealed to the public twenty more plays, among which

were such matchless productions as *Julius Caesar*, *Twelfth Night*, *As You Like It*, *Measure for Measure*, *Macbeth*, and *Antony and Cleopatra*. It thus appears that a number of the poet's best creations — altogether more than half of all his work — were somewhere kept in manuscripts, in perfect secrecy, for more than ten years. We know no similar occurrence in the history of mankind, and this extraordinary fact has, until now, found no explanation in the poet's biographies.

It is obvious, of course, that some of the above-quoted passages from the plays would apply to many well born and bred Englishmen of the time. And, in fact, not less than nine contemporaries have been suggested as entitled to share the glory of the First Folio: Francis Bacon, Antony Bacon, Southampton, Derby, Rutland, Oxford, Sir Walter Raleigh, the Countess of Pembroke, and one yet unnamed contemporary. We note however a few particular indications which cannot be referred to all these unconscious claimants. These indications are:

1. A friendly connection with the Earls of Southampton and of Essex.

2. A very probable, as good as certain, sojourn in Italy at an early period of the poet's life and a later voyage to Denmark.

3. Good knowledge of law and actual experience in war on land and sea

4. A possible marriage about 1600.

5. A personal calamity about 1601.

6. An unknown event which brought an end to the poet's work after 1612.

If we find that a young nobleman, a keen sportsman, a friend of the Earl of Southampton from their University

days, yet in his teens at the time of composition of the earlier dramas, was a student at an Italian University in the late nineties of the century; that he married, sometime about 1600, a relative or a connection of the Earl of Essex, and followed the latter in some of his naval expeditions; then joined in his rebellion in 1601, and was for some time confined in the Tower; that about 1603 he made a voyage to Denmark, and that he died in 1612, would not these circumstances justify the conjecture that this man may have been the author of some, if not all, of the plays we have examined in the preceding pages? And if no other contemporary is discovered to correspond to every one of these particular indications, would this not strengthen the assumption?

Chapter III.

A Name

"... Southampton, Rutland, Herbert, Elizabeth Vernon, Lady Rich and her brother, the Earl of Essex, whose characters are assuredly reflected in the dramatic mirror of the works."

— Gerald Massey

Footmarks and fingerprints — The poet's apparent connections — The romance of Southampton and Elizabeth Vernon in "Two Gentlemen of Verona", "Much Ado about Nothing" and in "As You Like It" — Rutland and Elizabeth Sidney in the plays — Converging indications.

HOWEVER intolerant Shakespeare scholars of different creeds may be among themselves, there is a point on which all, cool agnostics, lofty Stratfordians, and fervent heretics, are entirely agreed. The same men and women are recognized by them as the poet's friends and connections. Sir George Greenwood, the leader of the agnostics, affirmed: "The man who wrote those works must undoubtedly have represented the highest culture of his age; must have been one familiar with Courts and accustomed to meet the greatest of his time on a footing of equality." Orthodox Gerald Massey, along with other orthodox critics, gives the names

of these greatest: Southampton, William Herbert, Philip Herbert, Lady Rich and her brother, the Earl of Essex, Elizabeth Vernon, Elizabeth Sidney, the Earl of Rutland, whose characters are "assuredly reflected in the dramatic mirror of the works". Mrs. Clara Longworth, Countess de Chambrun, as orthodox as any Shakespeare biographer, writes: "Whenever a sincere attempt has been made to reconstruct the environment in which Shakespeare's genius ripened, the student has been forced back into the world of these two personages, Essex and Southampton." Mr. J. Thomas Looney, a heretic, goes so far as to say: "We feel entitled to claim for Shakespeare a high social rank, and even a close proximity *with royalty itself*." If the poet met these high personages as his equals, it is among them that we must seek him. Members of such coteries know each other and about each other. And in fact there are not a few passages in the plays suggesting that the real Shakespeare was well informed on the *chronique scanadalse* of the time. He knew or had heard some dark stories which were never spoken of in Westminster or at Nonesuch or Greenwich save in a cautious whisper, for it was a time when "below the surface of caracoling courtiers and high policies, there was cruelty, corruption and gnashing of teeth"; when amusing comedies and sinister tragicomedies were as frequent in real life as on the stage. One of these tragicomedies is constantly reappearing under Shakespeare's pen. It is the seduction, the slander or the desertion of a good woman by a man who loves her, but brings about her sorrows through his rashness, his waywardness, or his jealousy: Claudio, in *Much Ado*, repudiated Hero; another Claudio, in *Measure for Measure*, became Juliet's lover before marrying her; Angelo, in the same play, deserted Mariana; Pro-

teus, in *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, deserted Julia; Bertram, in *All's Well that Ends Well*, deserted Helena, and slandered Diana. Why should this story so persistently haunt Shakespeare's fancy? The simple answer is, because it was a real story; because he knew Claudio and Juliet, Proteus and Julia in real life.

Henry Wriothesley, Second Earl of Southampton, was one of the most accomplished young men at Queen Elizabeth's Court. His first appearance in London in 1595 seemed to inaugurate a brilliant career of honours. For some time he had almost superseded Essex in the royal favor. But he was of too manly and noble a disposition to covet the part of an old woman's fondling. Besides, there was metal more attractive in the immediate vicinity of the Queen. He was soon in love with one of her maids of honor, the lovely Elizabeth Vernon, daughter of Sir John Vernon of Hornby and Lady Elizabeth Devereux, Essex's aunt. As early as September 1595, Rowland Whyte wrote to Sir Robert Sidney that Southampton was courting the young lady "with too much familiarity": It was his desire to marry her, but the Queen opposed this intention with the greatest irritation. For three years the lovers were kept apart by her relentless aversion to their marriage. The girl was true to her lover, but the latter's hot blood and impatient humor brought her many an unhappy hour. He seems to have taken every opportunity of leaving London and "hoisted sail to every wind that would blow him farthest from her". Rowland Whyte wrote on January 14, 1597: "I heare My Lord Southampton goes with Mr. Secretary to France, and onward on his travels, which course of his does extremely grieve his mistress, that passeth her time in weeping and lamenting."

Proteus. Have patience, gentle Julia.

Julia. I must, where is no remedy.

Pro. When possibly, I can, I will return.

Two Gentlemen of Verona, II, 2.

At the same time, Southampton's jealousy was easily roused. Five days later, we hear from the same source: "Some unkindness should be between 3000 [Southampton] and his Mistress, occasioned by some report of Mr. Ambrose Willoughby. 3000 called him to account for it, but the matter was made known to My Lord of Essex and My Lord Chamberlaine, who had them in examination. What the cause is I could not learn, but I see 3000 full of discontentment." Later, in a letter of February 1, 1598 we read: "My Lord of Southampton is much troubled by her Majesty's strangest usage of him. Somebody hath played unfriendly parts with him. Mr. Secretary hath procured him license to travel; his fair Mistress doth wash her fairest face with too many tears. I pray God this going away may bring her to no such infirmity which is, as it were, hereditary to her name."

Julia. To think upon her woes I do protest
That I have wept a hundred several times.

Silvia. Belike she thinks that Proteus hath forsook her?

Jul. I think she doth; and that's her cause of sorrow . . .

Sil. Alas, poor lady, desolate and left!

I weep myself to think upon thy words.

Two Gentlemen, IV, 4.

Yet, whatever may have been Southampton's faults, they never affected the girl's devotion to him. "His unjust unkindness, that in all reason should have quenched her love, had, like an impediment to the current, made it more violent and unruly" (*Measure for Measure, III, 1*). In August, 1598,

Southampton, who was then in Paris, was informed that a marriage had become necessary to redeem her honor. He secretly came to London and married her. Essex was present at the ceremony. The Lord Chamberlain tells the story: "Mistress Vernon is from the Court and lies at Essex House. Some say she hath taken a venue under her girdle, and swells upon it; yet she complains not of foul play, but says my Lord Southampton will justify it, and it is bruited that he was lately here four days in great secret of purpose to marry her and effected it accordingly." A week later the same writer says: "Yesterday the Queen was informed of the new Lady of Southampton and her adventures, whereat her patience was so moved that she came not to chapel. She threateneth them all to the Tower, not only the parties, but all that are partakers of the practice. It is confessed the Earl was here and solemnized the act himself."

The Queen's wrath knew indeed no bounds. We hear from another letter that she "commanded the novizia Countess to the sweetest and best appointed lodging in the Fleet", and that "her lord is also commanded to return to Paris upon his allegiance with all speed". A few weeks later it was still worse: "The Earl of Southampton is come home, and for his welcome is committed to the Fleet." He was soon released, but the Queen never relented to the married couple.

The romance of Southampton's courtship and marriage, is, as we have seen, reflected with variations in several of Shakespeare's plays. It is evident that the poet was inclined to put a certain blame on the Earl for his lack of constancy and patience. This point is more particularly emphasized in *Much Ado about Nothing* by the introduction of two new characters who have no part in the original story. They are

Benedick and Beatrice. It is generally recognized by critics and most intimately realized by common readers that these two are much nearer to the poet's heart than the other couple. Who then, if Claudio and Hero are drawn from life, can be Benedick? Who is Beatrice?

One of the means of catching an insight into the mysteries of a poet's individuality is the study of his alterations in the elements borrowed by him from other sources than his own invention. These alterations are a reflexion of his own mind. They may be pure artistic *caprices*; they may originate in some particular experiences or observations of his own. We have an example of this in the very first lines of *Much Ado about Nothing*. The story in the source of the play (Bandello's Novella) begins after a signal and bloody victory of Don Pedro of Arragon against King Charles of Naples. "The said King Pedro held his court many days in Palermo.... Presently, hearing that King Charles the Second, son of King Charles the First, who held the Kingdom of Naples, came by sea with a great armament to expel him from Sicily, he went out against him with such ships and galleys as he had and joined battle with him, whereupon sore was the melee and cruel the slaughter. In the end King Pedro defeated King Charles' fleet and took him prisoner; after which, the better to prosecute the war, he removed his whole Court to Messina."

Here was a very effective introduction to the play. How was it rendered by the poet?

Leonato. How many gentlemen have you lost in action?

Messenger. But few of any sort and none of fame.

Leonato. A victory is twice itself when the achiever brings home full numbers. I find here that Don Pedro has bestowed much honour on a young Florentine called Claudio.

Messenger. Much deserved on his part...

Beatrice. I pray you, is signor Montanto returned from the war or not?

Hero. My cousin means Signor Benedick of Padua.

Messenger. Oh, he is returned and as pleasant as ever he was.

Why should the richly coloured picture be discarded and a very tame one introduced in its stead? Possibly, for no particular reason. Not impossibly, because the poet had another picture before his eyes. The play, as we know, was published in 1600. By the end of 1599 the Earls of Essex and of Southampton were back in London from the by no means brilliant expedition against the Irish rebels. The general feeling on this campaign is expressed in the following lines of Mr. Cholmley to Edw. Reynolds in August 1599. "I can say we have gone through places, we victualled forts, we have taken castles, we have set houses on fire, we have placed garrisons, we have made many knights, but there were no battles, no victories to record." The lines just quoted are echoed in Leonato's intercourse with the Messenger. If Claudio is Southampton, the question arises, was there a Benedick, that is, an officer and a friend of Southampton, who served under Essex in the expedition to Ireland and who married soon after their return home, as Benedick does in the play?

The answer to this question is given by two writers who are above suspicion of any heretical tendencies in the identity disputes: Gerald Massey and Gregor Sarrazin. "The plot of the Italian novel," the latter says, "is so cleverly altered that the play became a picture of what happened in true life. We need but compare Don Pedro of Arragon with the Earl of Essex, the Count Claudio with the Earl

of Southampton, *Benedick of Padua with the Earl of Rutland*, Hero with Elizabeth Vernon, and Beatrice with Elizabeth Sidney." Such was also the view of Gerald Massey, who was ever an ardent Shakespearean, and as orthodox as any of the most uncompromising Stratfordians. His study of the Sonnets should be carefully read by all earnest Shakespeare lovers. Dr. Sarrazin has apparently analysed the facts quite independently from Gerald Massey, but this only makes their identical conclusions the more convincing. Mr. Arthur Acheson, as confirmed a follower of the Stratford tradition as Massey and Sarrazin, writes: "It is extremely probable that *Much Ado about Nothing*, the composition of which is indicated by all evidence in the autumn of 1599, reflecting as it does a deferred marriage and the return of gentlemen from a war, in which their only glory has been that they have 'brought home full numbers', was written by Shakespeare for the festivities upon the occasion of the marriage of the Earl of Rutland to Essex's step-daughter after the return of Essex and Southampton from Ireland in the autumn of this year 1599."

There is scarcely any plot in *As You Like It*. There are again two marriages, but the circumstances are quite different from *Much Ado*, and from *Two Gentlemen of Verona*. Gerald Massey wrote: "*As You Like It* is based upon a banishment from Court and an exile in the country, and we learn from the private friends of Shakespeare that a banishment from Court of Essex, Elizabeth Vernon, Lady Rich, and the rest had occurred in reality at the end of 1598. About this time Elizabeth Vernon was laid up at Essex House 'with reasons', and her cousin, Lady Rich, was laid up with her and her banished brother Essex. 'Then were two cousins laid up; when the one should be lamed

with reasons, and the other mad without any.' (Act I, 3).'' Dr. Sarrazin compares the play with a later occurrence in the same social circle. "The inference," he writes, "is enforced that the characters of the banished Duke and his followers are drawn after the Earl of Essex and some of his clan. The malcontents centred at Essex House. The Earl and the Countess of Southampton lived there from time to time. In the summer of 1600 they appear to have left London for the country. The original of Rosalind, the Duke's daughter, must again be Elizabeth Sidney, Essex's step-daughter. For it is plain that Rosalind and Beatrice are modelled after the same pattern. It follows not that the Earl of Rutland is the original of Orlando; but as the love-fencing between Benedick and Beatrice is carried on in the later play, we are led to surmise a poetical reminiscence of the same love-affair, of which Shakespeare must have heard, if from no other source, from the Earl of Southampton." But may not the poet have told us his own story in the two comedies?

Roger Manners, fifth Earl of Rutland, was an intimate friend of both Southampton and Essex. He was colonel of a foot regiment in Essex's expedition to Ireland, and he married his step-daughter, Elizabeth Sidney, in 1600, the time of composition of *Much Ado*, and *As You Like It*. The coincidences are obvious. Does it seem probable that two English lords of Shakespeare's time, real peers, that is, equals of kings and queens, young lords whose fathers had fought under the Roses, who counted their ancestors from the Hundred Years War and backward, bred and brought up in the aristocratic environment and with the traditional prejudices of caste, should have elected an actor from Shoreditch for the depository of their most intimate love-affairs? And

not only trusted him with these delicate matters, but encouraged, or at least allowed him to blaze them over the footlights for the flapping ears, the gaping jaws, and the coarse jokes of the cockpit and the groundlings of the Globe, the Rose or the Blackfriars? We find no such examples in the history of literature. We know, indeed, that Molière, Goethe, Byron, Pushkine, as other great poets, often whispered their joys and their sorrows in their poems and plays; but we do not see them pouring out their heart's complaints to their grooms and varlets, or to comic or tragic actors for public entertainment.

From the improbable and never happening, let us turn to the natural and the usual. Surely nobody knew the circumstances of the love-affairs of the two lords better than they themselves. Any one of them may have told the story. A well educated nobleman could write a comedy as well as a self-taught actor. And if he told his own story, he would know exactly how much he cared to tell about it: what to withdraw from the script and what to cover in some way or other so as to make it intelligible to those only who were expected to read between the lines. If this happened to be so, which of the two might be the real poet? Southampton's life and career have been studied by more than one scholar, sometimes with the special purpose of investigating his connection with the plays; but nothing has been found to suggest that he may have been the author. We know, besides, that Shakespeare's first poetic efforts, his two poems, were dedicated to Southampton. Having never heard of a poet's dedicating his compositions to his own person, we conclude that, if one of the two friends may have been Shakespeare, it was more probably not Southampton; but Rutland. It being our rule to meet

with an open mind any reasonable suggestion, we shall now examine what is known of the life and adventures of that man. If there really are autobiographical elements in the dramas, we will certainly discover more facts, corresponding to them in his career. If, on the contrary, no further coincidences and concordances are apparent, then Benedick may be Rutland, but Rutland is not Shakespeare. We will discard the suggestion and will turn again to the old tradition of Stratford on Avon or to some other acceptable solution of the problem.

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Chapter IV.

A Boy

"Shakespeare is incarnated, uncompromising feudalism "

— *Walt Whitman*

Roger Manner's ancestors — The Boy at Cambridge — Lord Burghley — Books and documents at Belvoir Castle — Curricula and college regulations — Early friendship with Southampton — Death of the Countess of Rutland

ROGER Manners, fifth Earl of Rutland, was born October 7, 1576, in the Castle of Belvoir, Leicestershire. He was the eldest son of the fourth Earl, John Manners, and Elizabeth Charleton of Apsley Castle, Shropshire. The founder of the Manners family, Sir Robert Manners or de Mannerius, was Lord of the Castle of Ethale, County Northumberland, about the time of the Conquest. The line of descent between Roger Manners, the fifth Earl, and his oldest ancestor is established uninterruptedly, but beyond births, marriages, and deaths the information on the earlier generations is scant. We only know that one of Sir Robert's direct descendants, John Manners, fought under the Roses, in the "Contention between the two noble houses of Lancaster and York", on the side of King Henry VI. Sir Robert

Manners, the son of Sir John's elder brother, married Lady Eleanor de Ross, who brought him as part of her dowry the Castle and estates of Belvoir in Leicestershire. Through this marriage the history of the Manners is connected with that of another Norman family, the Todení-Albini-de Ross. The records of the Ross present some facts not irrelevant to our story.

Belvoir or Beauvoir Castle, the ancestral seat of the present Dukes of Rutland, was founded shortly after the Battle of Hastings by Robert de Todení, standard-bearer to William the Conqueror, as a stronghold against the still untamed Saxons. His son, William de Todení I, took the surname of Albini Brito, in consequence, it is supposed, of his marriage into the family of the Albini of Bretagne. The name de Todení was for some reason abandoned by him. He is mentioned in history for signal bravery at the battle of Tenerchebray in Normandy under King Henry I. In 1195, William de Albini Brito III also went to Normandy with King Richard I,

That robb'd the lion of his heart
And fought the holy Warres in Palestine

This William de Albini was one of the Barons who rebelled against the despotism of King John and obtained from him the Magna Charta and the Charta Foresta at Runnymede. William de Albini IV had no sons, and his daughter Isabel married Robert de Ross, Baron of Hamlake, great grandson of Peter de Ross, the oldest known ancestor of this last family. In 1348, at the beginning of the Hundred Years War, William de Ross fought at Crecy under Edward the Black Prince. The next baron, Thomas de Ross IV, went with the King of Cyprus to Jerusalem



My singular good Ladye and mother in due most
humbly remembrance vnto your Lpp May it please you to
vnderstand that I am in verie good health. I thanke god and
verie sorie that my brother Francis his iorney hither was
letted by reason of the weather. and verie glad that my
brother George his ague is ^{gone} but most of all sorie that my
swete sister hath caught the ague, for which my Ladye
wharston and my losses are verie sorie, as well as my
selfe. I make no doubt but your Lpp. heareth from her
how she and my Cosens doe by this messenger. Thus hath
craving your blessing, I humbly take my leave this 23rd of
february 1590.

Your Lpps most dutyfull and obedient Sonne.

Roger Rutland

To chase these Pagans in those holy Fields
Over whose acres walk'd those blessed feete
Which fourteen hundred yeares ago were nail'd
For our advantage on the bitter Crosse.

In the War of the Roses Thomas Lord Ross, fought
under the Earl of Warwick, the King-Maker, for Henry VI.

Now Somerset, where is your argument?
Here is my scabbard meditating that
Shall dye your white rose in a bloody red.

After the battle of Tewsbury, King Edward IV of York rewarded his partisans with the confiscated lands of the Lancastrians. The de Ross family suffered with the rest, but the ancestral estates were recovered in the next reign by Edmund, Lord Ross, who however left no male issue, and his sister Eleanor de Ross, as aforesaid, brought Belvoir Castle to her husband, Sir Robert Manners. Their son George assumed, in his mother's right, the title of de Ross and married Anne St. Leger, daughter of Sir Thomas St. Leger by Lady Anne of the house of Plantagenet — sister of King Edward IV and King Richard III. The next Lord Ross Thomas was created Earl of Rutland by Henry VIII — a title which belonged to Edmund, younger brother of King Edward IV, and had never been conferred upon any but of blood royal. In allusion to such royal connections, the arms of the Manners — or, two bars azure, a chief gules — were enriched by a chief quarterly, azure and gules; on the first and fourth, three fleur-de-lis, or; on the second and third, a lion of England. The first Earl was Lord Chamberlain to Queen Anne of Cleves. He had eleven sons and daughters, among whom were Henry, the second Earl, and John. The third Earl leaving no male issue, the title



all humble remembrance of my suite I crave your
blessings. May it please your Lpp I received this letter
from my uncle Roger in the behalfe of this oaver at
such tyme as I was going forth with my L of Rutland
where we referringe the matter unto your Lpp
craving pardon for my scribbling in hast I humbly
take my leave June the 13 1591

your Lps most dutiefull and
loone ROGER RUTLAND

ROGER MANNERS' LETTER TO HIS MOTHER,
THE COUNTESS OF RUTLAND,
from Cambridge, June 13, 1591.

came to the descendants of Sir John, Thomas and John Manners. The fourth Earl, John, was Lord Lieutenant of the county of Nottingham and of Sherwood Forest. He had four sons and three daughters. As before said, Roger Manners was his eldest son. Waving aside the Stratfordian tradition and legends, would we not say that the man who wrote England's history as Shakespeare wrote it must have been connected in some way with the very birth of England? Roger Manners had in him the blood of the Conquerors, of the Crusaders and of English Kings.

The future fifth Earl of Rutland was sent to Cambridge at eleven years of age and placed under the tutorship of John Jegon, Master of Queen's College, a man of broad mind and strong character, later Bishop of Norwich. Some of the lad's letters home have been preserved at Belvoir Castle. We may cast a glance at these sere'd leaves which may some day rank as the most sacred of England's heirlooms. On February 4, 1588 Roger Manners wrote to his mother:

"I beseech you to pardon my not writinge to you since my coming from you. The verie cause that chefully staied me heretofore doth make me also partly unwilling to write now, namely my ill-inditing and worse writinge; but I trust my boldness will seeme a lesse fault then my silence; but I pray your Ladyship to think well of both; I thanke God I have my healthe varie well and as for other wants, I thanke my Lord and you, they are well supplied."

A month later, the boy heard of his father's death. He wrote to the Countess:

"I commend myself unto you and to my brethren and sisters, desiring God to send you and us all his comforte in this-our greate heavinesse, wherwith he doth

afflicte us. I thanke God to preserve your good ladyship in the like healthe and welfare, in whom is now myne only staye. And therefore good madame now more and more — if it be possible — increase your careful love and loving care for me. I trust in God that you shall ever — while my life doth laste — find me your most obediente dutifull and thankfull sonne."

The Manners were well connected and, by the late Earl's will, the Earl of Leicester and Lord Burghley, the Queen's treasurer, were made supervisors to the estate. Lord Burghley wrote to the Countess, promising to undertake that all reasonable charges would be paid for the boy's tutor, his diet and the number of persons necessary to attend upon him. Apart from his tutor, the lad had one or two man-servants and a boy attached to him. He also had the use of some horses for riding, which seems to have been one of his main concerns at the time. Early in 1589, he was summoned to London by Lord Burghley to be presented to the Queen. His account to his mother is brief:

"I am safely returned with many comfortable encouragements from my honorable frendes in London, whose kindenesse, what it was towards me, I will reserve till I be present with your Ladyship. Only this, Her Maiestie useinge me very graciously sayde she knewe my father for an honest man, and for my mother althoughe she knewe her not, she had hearde much good of her. I pray your Ladyship send thanks to my Lord Treasurer and Mr. Secretarie Walsingham for me. Thus verie werie of my journey I hastely take my leave."

The young Earl was a royal ward, and Lord Burghley was his guardian in the Queen's behalf. He was good at work. "I trust," he wrote to his mother, "that you shall hear nothing but that I follow my book well." This is

confirmed by his tutor: "Our young Lord is very well in health and very well set on work, cheerfully following what he takes in hand and proves thereby the best of his time and companions."

The towers and the vaults of the Castle, Roger's "rough cradle, his rude, ragged nurse, his old playfellow", had stood through many a memorable day; the vines girdling its turrets, the ivy climbing up its rugged piles had many a tale to whisper to an alert and responsive mind. The boy, as we can see from his letters, lacked neither feeling nor spirit. If during his visits home from Cambridge his imagination ever wandered to days gone by, the Castle's ancient stones would not be silent to him.

What kind of books would the lad find at home? For some time before his death the late Earl John had been purchasing the very best works of the time on Theology, History, Geography and *belles lettres* in modern and ancient languages. The latest and finest productions of learning were there, in stately rows of majestic folios and quartos or tiny *in-32*, the choicest, the very best that were printed in England or came from France, Germany, Italy or the Low Countries, such as: *Summa Theologiae* of Thomas Aquinas; *Condemnation of the Augsburg Confession* by the Patriarch of Constantinople; *Alberici Gentilis de Legationibus Libri Tres*; *Sopplimento delle Chronice Universali del Mondo* of F. Giacompo Fillipo d. Bergamo, translated into Italian by F. Sansovino; Archbishop Parker's *Historia Major*; *Compendio delle Historie del regno di Napoli* by Pandolfo Colenuccio; *Les Grandes Annales et Histoires Generales de France* by François de Belleforest; Camden's *Brittannia*, *Theatri Orbis Terrarum Parergon sive Veteris Geographiae*

Tabulae of Abraham Ortelius; Machiavell's Discourses in French, and many more.

To return to Cambridge. The rules of the University were strict. The students were confined within the walls of their colleges, leaving them only to attend their schools. Chapel was held at five in the morning. Apart from the private study with the tutor, the students attended the college lectures, the lectures of the University professors, and the disputations of students preparing for their degrees. The lectures comprised Latin, Greek, Divinity, Hebrew, Law, Physic, Logic, Philosophy. It appears not from our records whether Roger Manners learned French at College; but judging by what was customary among young men of his social standing and education, it is probable that he did. We know that by the time of his graduation he had an excellent knowledge of Italian. The regulations forbade the students, when out of town, to go into the taverns or to boxing matches, dancings, bear-fights, and cock-fights, to frequent Sturbridge fair or loiter in the market or about the streets. In their rooms they were not to read irreligious books, nor play cards or dice, "except for twelve days at Christmas, and then openly and in moderation"; yet the very fact that such regulations were necessary shows that they were sinned against. Writing in 1620 from St. John's, Sir Simonds D'Ewes says: . . . "the main thing which made me even weary of the college was, that swearing, drinking, rioting, and hatred of all piety and virtue under false and adulterated names did abound in all the University. Nay, the very sin of lust began to be known and practiced by very boys." We need not go so far. But unless we chose to make a nursery good boy of Roger Manners, we must surmise that he would upon occasions read forbidden books,

straggle in the streets, listen to idle talk of the townfolk, bet at cock-fights and discuss dogs and horses in public houses with their perhaps somewhat coarse but merry and friendly customers. But neither cards nor dice nor beer; nor tavern hunters, boxers nor gamblers were held in greater abhorrence and abomination by the Chancellor and faculty than were straggling packs of public players and their performances. The authorities could not prevent their visits to the town, but they obtained an order in Council forbidding the pestilent vagabonds even to approach the college grounds. The undergraduates were, of course, forbidden with equal severity from frequenting the public performances in town. It appears, however, from certain quarto plays that on exceptional occasions actors' companies were admitted to play before the faculty and the students, and the severity of repeated regulations shows that, in spite of Chancellors, Vice-Chancellors and Proctors, the undergraduates must have occasionally stolen forth to see the performances of the Lord Chamberlain's or the Lord Admiral's men. And they smuggled into college rooms the quartos of London plays "that were turned out in such enticing form by the London printing presses".

We do not know who were the boy's schoolmates and chums in college. But one of his elder friends was Henry Wriothesley, Earl of Southampton, as he, a royal ward and a child of State, son of the second Earl of Southampton, and Mary Browne, Countess of Montague. The young men were born on the same day of the year, but Southampton was Rutland's elder by three years. Roger graduated as Master of Arts on February 20th, 1595. The Queen allowed him to go abroad to complete his education. It was the fashion among the English nobility to spend

some time in one of the Italian Universities. Roger took leave of his mother.

We know little of the Dowager Countess of Rutland. Her letters show us a dignified, courteous and quietly clear-headed woman. Her style is perfect. Her attitude towards the Queen is respectful throughout, yet entirely lacking the servility which pervaded the writings of the time. It is to be regretted that none of her letters to her son should have reached us. She died shortly before he went abroad.

Chapter V.

A Mysterious Playwright in Cambridge

"The scenes in *Laelia* between Flaminius and Fabius seem to me not unworthy of the admiration even of Shakespeare."

— Prof. G. C. Moore-Smith

"The writer of *Laelia* appears at even greater advantage in comparison with Shakespeare himself."

— Prof. F. S. Boas

Anonymous plays at Cambridge — "Laelia" and "Twelfth Night" — Echoes of "Laelia" in "Two Gentlemen" and in "As You Like It" — Echoes of "Silvanus" in "The Comedy of Errors" and in "Midsummer Night's Dream" — Echoes of "Hispanus" in "Henry V", "Richard III" and "The Merchant of Venice" — Echoes of "Machiavellus" in "The Merchant of Venice", "Macbeth" and "Hamlet" — One Shakespeare or more in Cambridge? — Identification of the college playwright.

WE HAVE not mentioned in our preceding chapter one of the favorite recreations of the boys at Cambridge — private theatricals. Reading and acting classic plays was part of the college program. From reading and acting to writing was a tempting and an easy step. It has been said that every boy had a play in his pocket or in his desk. They wrote all kinds of plays, in English and in Latin, unconsciously fol-

lowing the yet uncoined rule: *tous les genres sont bons hormis le genre ennuyeux*. Between the years 1586 and 1597 the following plays were performed at Cambridge along with classic Latin pieces:

<i>Terminus et non Terminus</i> , by Nash			
and another student	.	.	1586
<i>Roxana</i> , by W. Alabaster	.	.	1592
<i>Laelia</i> , anonymous	.	.	1595
<i>Silvanus</i> , anonymous	.	.	1596
<i>Hispanus</i> , anonymous	.	.	1597
<i>Machiavellus</i> , anonymous	.	.	1597

The records of the University show that as a rule the writers made no secret of their authorship. We find the names of A. Fraunce, H. Hickman, Thos. Legge, Master of Gaius College, Thos. Mudde, W. Hawkesworth and G. Ruggle as authors of other plays. It is an unusual occurrence that in the three years between 1595 and 1597 four *anonymous* plays should have been produced, and no others. Unquestionably, the most remarkable of these plays was *Laelia*, an adaptation of an Italian comedy *Gl'Ingannati*. This comedy presents the adventures and complications arising from the confusion of a girl in male attire with her twin brother. Prof. Fred S. Boas has shown that the unnamed writer of the Latin play took his plot not from the Italian original, but from a French version of it by Ch. Etienne, *Les Abusez*. The learned critic speaks highly of this *essai de plume* of a college novice. "Had *Laelia*," he says, "been an original work, its author would stand in the front rank of academical playwrights.... The love intrigue in *Les*

Abusez was so ingenious and entertaining that it could not in essentials be bettered, but . . . the tact and craftsmanship of the Cambridge dramatist heightened the effect . . . He strung up the somewhat sprawling prose of his French original into the closer, weightier texture of Latin comic verse. And more than once, at critical points, he broke an uninterrupted speech into breathless, poignant dialogue."

~ We will compare the same passage in the two plays. The disguised heroine reports to her master, Flaminius, her unsuccessful mission to the cruelly indifferent Isabella:

Laelia (as Fabius, the page). Have I not told it you many times? The greatest pleasure you can give her in this world is to leave her and not to think of her any more. She has turned her fancy elsewhere. Therefore she will show you neither a kind eye nor a good pretence. And you are wasting your time and all your efforts. At the end you will find yourself with your hands full of wind.

This is the girl's speech in the French play. And this is the the same passage in *Laelia*:

Laelia-Fabius. She asks you not to think of her who has banished you from her heart.

Flaminius. Banished? Miserable me!

Lae. You must direct your love elsewhere . . .

Flam. Must I? The gods forbid!

Lae. . . . for it is her decision . . .

Flam. Her decision? Yes, Fabi?

Lae. Forbear. You have heard enough.

Flam. What her decision is, tell me. Let me hear it and die.

Lae. Shall I do it?

Flam. Why not? Art thou not my servant?

Lae. Whomsoever she might love, . . .

Flam. Go on!

Lae. . . . she never will love Flaminius.

Flam. O gods! She never will love Flaminius!

PAGE OF A PROMPT BOOK

of the Latin comedy *Machiauellus*, performed at Queen's College, Cambridge, on Commencement Day, 1597. Handwriting of an unknown undergraduate. The text contains lines echoed in *The Merchant of Venice* and *Macbeth*.

1. *Ja.* Habeo hinc coltellum. Eum etiam acutem reddam quo se
facilius interficiet...
2. *Ma.* Sed quid hoc? culter quo me accidem! quasi is de coelo
decidit.

Ma facine ut adiuvas? facine utcum agis?
 Adcom. donec tibi videor quoniam sic vana spe
 sollicitando et pollicitando laboras? o quam spes
 frustrata est mea. utinam hic adesset aliquis
 quo perirem, perire cupiens, et qui me perire cogit.
 Ja. habes hic cultellum, cum etiam acutum reddam
 quo se facilius interficiat, ne qua mora sit.
 An. minus horre nunc furoristi? hodie somnus hac nocte
 a te absuit, ito domum et somno te reuerse.
 Ma. nisi in somno hac nunquam locutus es.
 ita? fuit? An. si lapis? Ma. ubi ego somnum
 captam ubi Orlanda non forma valet?
 ubi ego somnum capiam ubi inimica quo etis?
 nullum ego somnum capiam nisi somnum te mortem
 vocas? Ja. di date facultatem obsecro
 ut cultellum videat dum mortem inuolat.
 An. ah, si vir es meliora loquere. prior magister
 hoc te docuit laud amor. Ma. si non est amor
 est furor; et amica amissa dulcis est furor.
 An. ino amica amissa. tum multo magis opus est furor.
 Ma. id quid hoc? cultor quo non audiam?
 Ja. quasi is se ideo dicit.
 Ma. terra, aquor, aer, calum, inferi, superi
 quicquid diorum est, adeste et diis animis
 ad furorem instigatis. An. quid? habes cultum?
 Ma. per viam modo inveni. capto hunc cultum
 quasi dimittis raptum; et cum me facit Orlanda
 coges vivere, coge mori. cum hoc fata sunt
 ut in vita morier, faciant fortassis ut per
 mortem vivam. cogo, ne nega?
 Ja. quid stas lapis? cur non cum. ingulas?
 An. ego, ut id laudam? i. cultor. Funditus.
 Ja. ubi filipermium. di te tradunt funditus.
 Ma. ino inforam vir non eadem mihi forma
 potentia fuit, aut tibi hoc sententi-
 vias per me Machiavello et valeat prior
 hominum habe animam. Ma. qui possit. an
 tu tentas animam dimidiam habere.
 An. voluptas ex dolore nata est; age fortassis
 hoc tibi fuerit hostis paucos aliquot dies
 danti defunct.

This is narrative transformed into dialogue — the very essence of drama. The emotional superiority of the Latin play is not less remarkable. In *Gl'Ingannati* and in *Les Abusez*, Flaminio, on hearing of Laelia's pathetic story, is driven to despair by humiliation and self-reproach. He turns to flee from the haunts of men:

Flam. Let me escape the woeful sight of day, leave this city and my friends, and seek the woods and solitudes.

But Laelia overhears him and rushes to comfort him in an impulse of supreme devotion and passion:

Lae. Tarry! You shall not go alone. Fabius will follow his master.

Of course, this is infinitely better and, surely, we have heard it before, though not in Latin:

Olivia. Where goes Cesario?

Viola. After him I love.

The dénouement in *Twelfth Night* is confessedly very poor. Duke Orsino is spurned by Olivia and believes himself to be betrayed by Cesario-Viola. He sees a mere boy, Sebastian, preferred to him, and that boy is another Viola, being her twin brother. His natural feelings are humiliation and resentment. We would expect an outburst of anger and perhaps some vindictive action on his part, instead of which he turns to Viola:

Boy, thou hast said to me a thousand times
Thou never shouldst love woman like to me . . .

Give me thy hand
And let me see thee in thy woman's weeds.

Nothing could be less true to life. We let it pass because the play has already given us royal entertainment and because all's well that ends well. But such matches only happen behind the footlights, not off the stage. In *Laelia*, the girl's triumph is artistically prepared by some very pathetic and at the same time quite realistic scenes between her and her master.

Laelia. (as the page Fabius). Have you never met another girl whom you would consider not unworthy of your love?

Flaminius. There is a girl in this same city. Laelia's her name. She's not unlike you, Fabi. A chaste and shapely maiden. She and I Were one time lovers. She, poor child, Doth love me still . . . I can't requite her love.

Lae. You spurn her that doth love you and will love Her that doth spurn you. This, methinks, is justice, Not your misfortune. 'Tis a heavy sin, You should desert one who ne'er sinned against you. Pardon my liberty: I serve your honour. All this comes but from love.

This is indeed excellent. We know it was written by a youngster. But if we didn't, we would not suspect it. Every line, every word has a meaning and a purpose. And again, what is more remarkable, it sounds strangely familiar:

Julia. It seems you love her not to leave her token. She's dead, belike?

Proteus. Not so; I think she lives.

Jul. Alas!

Pro. Why dost thou cry Alas?

Jul. I can not chose but pity her . . . She dreams on him that has forgot her love; You dote on her that cares not for your love. 'Tis pity love should be so contrary.

Two Gentlemen of Verona, IV, 4.

It looks as if the undergraduate has reproduced a passage from Shakespeare. But, as we know, *Laelia* was acted in 1595, and *Two Gentlemen* was not published before 1623. In a later scene Laelia's despair is wrought up to a climax, but at the same time Flaminius shows his warm attachment to the supposed boy:

Flaminius. I swear by the gods of heaven and hell,
I never shall set foot where I can see Laelia.

Lae. Jupiter!

Flam. What is it to thee? Thy color is gone.

Lae. Jupiter!

Flam. What ails thee?

Lae. My heart, my heart!

Fla. Art sick?

Lae. No, no.

Fla. Lean upon me. Keep thy heart.

Lae. There is no woman I could lose my heart upon!

Fla. Why this sudden pain? Get thee into the house.

Thou'rt quite cold. I'll call a doctor presently.

In the mean time, keep warm; be comforted;

Let Crivelus rub thy shoulders. Go,

My boy; go'quick. I'll follow you anon.

(Solus). How heavy a wound 't would be to lose that boy!

He dotes on me as if he were a woman.

After this, the nurse's revelation, Flaminius' remorse, and his final *élan* towards Laelia are as natural as could be conceived. But we must tarry a while, for there is something else. We hear: "Thy color is gone; thou art quite cold; lean upon me." If we suit the action to the word, the girl is swooning. A delicate, an exquisite touch, and a truly Shakespearean one. We recollect, in *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, the scene where Julia, disguised as a boy, overhears Valentine's words to Proteus: (V, 4):

Val. All that was mine in Silvia I give thee.

Julia. O me, unhappy! (*swoons*).

Proteus. Look to the boy!

Val. Why, boy? why wag? how now? What's the matter?
Look up! Speak!

And well we know, in *As You Like It*, the famous scene (IV, 3):

Oliver. He sent me hither

... to give this napkin,

Dyed in his blood, unto the shepherd youth,
That he in sport doth call his Rosalind. (*Rosalind swoons.*)

Celia. Why, how now, Ganymede, sweet Ganymede?

Ol. Many will swoon when they do look on blood . . .

Look, he recovers.

Rosalind. I would I were at home.

Cel. We'll lead you thither

I pray you, will you take him by the arm?

Ol. Be of good cheer, youth! You, a man!

You lack a man's heart

Ros. I do so, I confess it

Cel. Come, you look paler and paler; pray you, go homewards.

So we have three girls fainting, and all three masquerading as boys. It is hard to say which is the prettiest scene. But the passage in *Laelia* is certainly not inferior to the two passages in Shakespeare. Mr. G. C. Moore-Smith makes the remark that the Cambridge playwright, in recasting some of the passages of his French original, *shows real dramatic sense*. The learned critic estimates that Shakespeare, in his passionate scenes, found truth and power "perhaps most of all in *Laelia*". These scenes, he tells us, are "not unworthy of the admiration even of *Shakespeare himself*". Prof. Boas says: "The writer of *Laelia* appears at even greater advantage in comparison with *Shakespeare himself*". A college

undergraduate superior to the greatest of dramatic poets! The greatest of dramatic poets seeking inspiration in a college play!

Prof. Boas has no definite explanation of the curious coincidences between *Twelfth Night* and *Laelia*. Mr. Moore-Smith suggests that Shakespeare might have borrowed a copy of *Gl'Ingannati* or of *Les Abusez*, perhaps even a manuscript of *Laelia*, and drawn some points of these to supplement his plot. But neither *Gl'Ingannati* nor *Les Abusez* can account for the particular coincidences between *Twelfth Night* and the college play. If we attribute *Twelfth Night* to Shakespeare of Stratford, we must assume that he had *Laelia*'s manuscript in his own hands. In other words, he, an accomplished dramatist, would tramp from Shoreditch in London to Cambridge and ask the lad to lend him a copy of *Laelia*; or else the college student would drop in at the Curtain or at St. Helen's, Bishopgate, the actor's quarters in London, to offer it to him. But is there no other explanation of the facts?

Prof. Boas and Dr. Moore-Smith are orthodox writers. To them, Shakespeare the dramatist is one person, and the Cambridge junior or senior is another. But not being fettered by tradition nor blinded by superstition, we think that they are one and the same person. This is the simplest and natural solution of the conundrum. He who wrote *Laelia*, may a few years later have written *Two Gentlemen*, *Twelfth Night*, and *As You Like It*. Which is more probable, that there should have been one Shakespeare, or two — and that the younger one in his teens wrote better than the elder at thirty?

The mystery of this anonymous Cambridge comedy and of its coincidences with Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* is

worthy of notice by itself. But the indications go further and are still more remarkable in view of the facts which followed it. The next year, in 1596, another anonymous Latin play, *Silvanus*, was given at Cambridge, and in this comedy we again find unexpected similarities with Shakespeare's plays. Prof. Boas writes: "The love complications are similar to those in the Queen's College comedy [i.e. *Laelia*], but there is a pastoral element in the play which links it with *As You Like It* as well as with *Twelfth Night*."

Silvanus, a Sicilian youth, has fled to Mantua to avoid marriage with Panthia who, under the name of Erastus, a boy, follows him into a wood. The high-born and beautiful Florinda falls in love with the disguised Panthia-Erastus, — Olivia and Viola-Cesario in *Twelfth Night* — while Silvanus, who saw Florinda in the wood, is dying for love of her; his wooing is unsuccessful because Florinda pines for Erastus-Panthia. Silvanus lies on the ground prostrate with grief. Panthia discovers him and kisses him, but he rejects her rudely and flies into the forest deep. This again is not new to us, for we recollect Helena and Demetrius in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (II, 2):

Dem.· I love thee not, therefore pursue me not....
Tempt not too much the hatred of my spirit,
For I am sick when I do look at thee.

In the same way Florinda's advances are rejected by Erastus-Panthia. She addresses the disguised girl in terms of passionate adoration; Panthia scorns her and runs away. In *A Midsummer Night's Dream* the scene between Helena and Demetrius is duplicated between Hermia and Lysander both episodes being integral parts of the plot. And this is of cardinal importance from our standpoint. An enamored

girl leading on a hesitating or unwilling lover and by disguise, deceit, or some such artifice inducing him to marry her had always been a favorite device on the stage. But she had not appeared chasing him in a wild cross-country race or hunting him in a forest. This was quite a new little "stunt", and a very effective one, as we know by enjoying it in Shakespeare's fairy play. We find now that this novelty was not originally invented by Shakespeare. We have again to imagine the actor-playwright trudging down from London to Cambridge to borrow another play, or the college boy running off the University grounds to offer his comedy to the actor — not for having it produced in the latter's theatre, but to help him in writing two or three plays of his own. We leave it to the reader to decide which of the two suggestions is the less absurd.

Orthodox critics have noted in *Silvanus* a line which we must not overlook. Harpalus, Silvanus' slave, asks Babylo, the rustic, to return his master's hunting dog which has killed one of Babylo's sheep. The latter answers in terms *which*, says Prof. Boas, *are remarkable in the mouth of a Mantuan shepherd*:

Young man, don't shout too loud. I know you have
A powerful voice, having a mouth like *Gargantua*.

It is remarkable indeed that a Mantuan shepherd should have read Rabelais; but much more remarkable when we find that Celia in *As You Like It* has also read him and quotes him in the same words: "You must borrow me *Gargantua's* mouth first; 'tis a mouth too great for any mouth *this age's* size . . ."

When Silvanus hears that Erastus-Panthia is his successful rival, his temper is roused:

What's this I hear? Erastus is my rival?

A slave to be preferred to his master!

No, No. I'll not stand that . . .

Florinda. What will you do?

Sil.

Destroy my rival!

Shakespeare seems to have read that too and to have thought of it when he was composing *Twelfth Night*. We recollect Orsino's embittered words to Olivia: (V, 1):

Live you the marble breasted tyrant still;
But this your minion, whom I know you love,
And whom, by heaven I swear, I tender dearly,
Him will I tear out of that cruel eye,
Where he sits crowned in his master's spite.

A slave of Silvanus conceives a *ruse de guerre* to help his master to enjoy the delights of love with the unwilling Florinda. With this secret purpose Silvanus masquerades as Erastus-Panthia, but when, ready for victory, he appears in Florinda's house, her step-mother detects the imposture. Babylo, Florinda's servant, is amazed at the transformation of the supposed and welcome Erastus into the undesirable Silvanus and expresses his astonishment in a set of incongruous images:

I have seen many extraordinary things:
I saw a king changed into a cat;
I saw a rustic changed into an ape;
I saw a hood [a monk] sirging ut re mi fa sol la;
I saw a pig play the organ;
I saw a camel dancing to the tune of a cithara;
I saw a donkey address the people from the rostrum.

The rustic changed into an ape and the donkey haranguing the Romans on the Forum suggest a significant coincidence. Prof. Dowden quoted a passage from the *Comedy of Errors* (II, 2):

Ant. of Syr. Thou hast thine own form.

Dromio of Syr.

No, I am an ape.

Luciana. If thou art changed to aught, 'tis to an ass . . .

The line, wrote Dowden, "vividly reminds us of Bottom's transformation in *Midsummer Night's Dream* . . . When Shakespeare wrote this, *can it be doubted* that he had in his thoughts *A Midsummer Night's Dream*?" The same remark is made by Mr. Henry Cunningham in his Preface to *The Comedy of Errors*: "This passage certainly goes far to support the idea that when Shakespeare wrote it, he was already dreaming of the fairy world of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*." Both critics are right. We arrest their words. Shakespeare was repeating himself. But he was also repeating another dramatist. We ask, as Dowden asked: "When the boy at Cambridge presented his Florinda and his Panthia chasing their lovers in the woods, and when he pictured the transformation of a man into an ape, and of a donkey into a Roman orator, *can it be doubted* that he had in his thoughts some of the future scenes of the *Comedy of Errors* and of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*?" The pictures were penned by the college boy many years before they reappeared under Shakespeare's quill in the shapes of Helena, Hermia, Dromio of Syracuse, and Bottom.

On Commencement Day of the same year, 1597, another comedy of unknown authorship, *Hispanus*, was performed at the University. Pandolphus, a merchant of Tarentum, has two daughters, Silvia and Fulvia. Three rivals are courting Silvia: the wealthy Cornelius, whose suit is favored by Pandolphus; Torquattus, a bragging Spaniard; and Aurelius, a young Florentine, Silvia's accepted lover. The situation is complicated by Fulvia's infatuation with Cornelius;

an Ethiopian slave, Polla, supplies the partner for a third pair to be united at the end of the play. Rhomeo, a parasite in the service of Cornelius, helps the spectators, by his asides, to catch certain subtleties of the dialogue. The action is altogether spirited and varied; the dialogue overladen with classic images and contemporary allusions. The episodes, partly dramatic and partly grotesque, are colorful and amusing. We need not go into details of the plot, but some incidents may be noted.

The prosperous but boorish Cornelius is instructed by his servant Carolus in the deportment and arts befitting a conqueror of women's hearts. Carolus impersonates Silvia, and Cornelius practices on him the captivating attractions to be performed on the girl. He seems to profit by the lesson and Carolus assures him that he outdoes Paris himself. We are reminded of one of Shakespeare's most famous scenes — Prince Hal rehearsing with Falstaff in the Boar's Head Tavern at Eastcheap his answers to the angry king, his father, after the daring robbery on the road to Gadshill (*I Henry IV*, II, 4).

Shakespeare's dramas, as we know, often contain various allusions to contemporary events outside the stage. Some passages in *Hispanus* are interesting in this respect. Rhomeo warns his patron Torquattus that Silvia's father may object to his suit and recommends some ingratiating efforts on his part. Torquattus bursts out:

I, who slew hosts of Britons with this hand,
Who with this dexter sent them to the Stygian dog,
When they besieged Lisbon in Portugal, shall I
Bow to this goat?

Rhomeo asks:

Were you not on the ships that went
To England's shores nine years ago?

Torquattus catches him up:

You mean
The day when I did sacrifice such numbers
To Nereus, lord of the seas, and Angles
Fed fishes with their bodies on the waves?

The effect of this monstrous lie on an English audience, to all of whom, freshmen, sophomores, juniors and seniors, Drake's victory was a vivid recollection,* must have been indescribable. Prince Hal's "Pray Heaven you have not murdered some of them" and Falstaff's "Nay, that's past praying for..." seem almost a tame joke in comparison. The last line in Torquattus's retort is reproduced in *Richard III*, in Clarence's description of his dream: (I, 4):

A thousand men that fishes gnawed upon....

It is generally believed that Gratiano's words to Shylock in the judgment scene of *The Merchant of Venice*: "a wolf, who, hanged for human slaughter .." are an allusion to the execution at Tyburn of Roderigo Perez, the Portugese Jew implicated in a plot against the Queen. We find in *Hispanus* the lines:

Vel hominen in desperatione, vel Doctorem Faustum,
Vel Doctorem Loppezium.....

Carolus mocks Cornelius for not having, among other personal advantages, *barbam quadratam hispanicam, ipso intuitu inimicis mortiferam* — a square-cut Spanish beard which kills at sight. This is as plain an illusion to Essex's

exploits at Cadiz as the well-known line in *Henry V*: "Were now the general of our gracious Empress . . ." was to Essex's disastrous campaign in Ireland.

One more anonymous Latin play, *Machiavellus*, was performed at St. John's on Commencement Day in 1597. As in *Hispanus* and in *The Merchant of Venice*, three suitors contend for the heroine's hand. Their two servants, Grillio and Grullio, remind us of Gremio and Grumio in *The Taming of the Shrew*. The hero, Phalantus, goes to the war and is reported killed. One of his rivals, Machiavellus, disguised as the ghost of Phalantus, risen from the underworld, appears before the girl's father and warns him not to give away his daughter to the third suitor, the Jew Jacuppus. But Machiavellus's own suit is also rejected. Despairingly he cries:

Would I had something here might help me to my death!

and the crafty Jacuppus, who overhears him, mutters

I have this knife; I'll go sharpen it at once
To help him to dispatch without delay.

The trait of cool cruelty comes like a lightning flash. Would we be wrong in connecting the beginner's penstroke with the lines introduced in a setting of gorgeous splendour by the master?

Gratiano. Why dost thou whet thy knife so earnestly?
Shylock. To cut the forfeiture from that Bankrupt's heart.

Andronicus, a friend, seeks to comfort the disappointed schemer and advises him to go home and rest. Machiavellus answers: "I can get no sleep unless you call death a sleep!"

— and at that moment he suddenly catches sight of the dagger which Jacuppus has thrown in his way. He utters:

What's this? A knife with which to kill me?
'T seems to have dropped from heaven!

as Macbeth uttered: (II, I):

Is this a dagger that I see before me,
The handle toward my hand?
Thou marshall'st me the way that I was going.

After King Duncan's murder, in the scene between the murderers, husband and wife, we recollect the lines:

Macbeth. Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood
Clean from my hand? No; this my hand will rather
The multitudinous sea incarnadine,
Making the green one red.

Lady Mac My hands are of your colour . . .

Yet if asked, which are the most horribly impressive lines in the tragedy, many a reader would quote another passage:

Here's a spot

Out, damned spot! Out, I say!— Yet who would have thought the old man to have so much blood in him

Here's the smell of blood still: all the perfumes of
Arabia will not sweeten this little hand.

Surely, this was never said before in the London play-houses . . . And yet when in the Cambridge *Hispanus* Rhomeo hears that Torquattus is married to Silvia's Ethiopian slave Polla, he calls out:

. . . . her blackness will not be washed off by the Britannic Ocean, nor the Mediterranean sea, nor the Caspian, nor by thee, Tagus; nor by the Tanais, nor Isis, nor the Thames;
Not by the Grant or the Trent or the Tweed . . .

This was written in 1597. *Macbeth* was not printed before 1623, and is first mentioned by Dr. Simon Forman in 1610.

We need not dwell on the melodramatic episodes in *Machiavellus*. But we should note one unusual scene — an interrupted funeral procession. The heroine is not dead, but asleep under the effects of a filter. We think of Juliet and of Ophelia's burial scene. A written or a printed line is not less a fact than the murder of a roman dictator or the destruction of the Spanish Armada. And we have before us more than one or two lines of ink and print. What then is the explanation of the obvious affinity between the Cambridge Latin plays and those of The Rose, The Theatre and The Globe? Occasional coincidences are inevitable in human affairs. But as we find them here, the coincidences cannot be explained as unrelat'ed occurrences. It remains to consider the possibility of imitation. But this again brings us to a no-thoroughfare. The College plays were acted only once and were not published; public actors were forbidden the very access to university grounds. There could be neither actual piracy, nor indiscreet imitation on the part of the boy. On the other hand, with the exception of *Errors*, *Richard III*, and *Two Gentlemen*, the Shakespeare plays mentioned above belong to the second period of his work, and not one of them was published before 1600, while the College plays were acted between 1595 and 1597. Shakespeare could not imitate the Latin plays because he had never seen them; the boys could not imitate Shakespeare's plays because Shakespeare had not yet written them. We have to conceive one or two or three or four mysterious college boys riding, driving or walking down the highroad between Cambridge and London, for the sake of contributing to a professional

actor's stock and store stage devices and rhetorical figures to be used by him at some future time, when his own imagination would have deserted him. Or else we must again think of the actor playwright walking, driving or riding from London to Cambridge for the same purpose.

It is much less improbable that there was one Shakespeare-like poet at Cambridge than three or four. We may imagine, against common experience, that there were at the same time three or four exceptionally gifted students at Cambridge; that they all wrote exceptionally good Latin plays for college theatricals; and that for some reason every one of them had to conceal his name. But that every one of these four boys should by some accident introduce in his play some scenes more or less in Shakespeare's particular vein, and that the master-playwright at forty, in the full swing of his powerful creative activity, should from time to time borrow effective scenes or lines from each one of these boys, is beyond the boundaries of sound reason. As to the boy's literary background, it may be gauged by Professor Moore-Smith's elaborate commentaries on *Laelia*. He finds the author twenty times in touch with Terence, and seventy-five times with Plautus. The college boy appears to have delved into Homer, Hesiod, Xenophon, Aristophanes, Plutarch and Aristotle; in Cicero, Cato, Seneca and Suetonius; in Horace, Ovid, Virgil and Juvenal; he mentions the humanistic school in Salerno and a Roman grammarian of the first years of our era; he adapts Lily's "Brevissima Institutio" and "Adagia" and the "Colloquia" of Erasmus to his text. In other words, this junior or senior undergraduate was familiar with all the literary, historical and geographical knowledge of his time and played with it as a juggler plays with his knives and rings. And to be fair to

the University poet, we must throw into the balance the heaviest intellectual element of the case. The youngster wrote in Latin. How much, how infinitely easier it is to achieve beauty and power in our own native speech than in a dead language; in the speech of mirth and sorrow that we hear around us from our mother's arms than in the words we learn in a Greek or Latin grammar book.

✧ But who could have been this wonderful apprentice? Judging by his extraordinary first efforts, we would expect to hear about him after he left college. Might he not have continued his dramatic work anonymously? Could he have taken some pen-name? Since earnest Shakespeare scholars affirm that some of his writings surpass even the master's own work, we cannot seek his name among the minor dramatists. Well may we ask, what became of that wonderful boy? And is not the simple answer — he was the genius we call Shakespeare? In sober logic, this is the only reasonable inference from facts. But the chief question still remains unanswered. The boy was Shakespeare, but who was the boy?

Laelia was performed at Queen's College on Commencement Day in 1595 in the presence of the Earl of Essex and other distinguished guests. There were commoners, knights and lords among the spectators. We have the names of all the commoners matriculated at the College between 1590 and 95, and find no hints of a Shakespeare in their subsequent careers. There were in the audience nine knights, and five peers, who received on the Commencement the degree of Master of Arts. The knights were: Sir Charles Candish, Sir Edward Wooten, Sir William Bowes, Sir Ferdinando Gorge, Sir Nicholas Clifford, Sir Conyers Clifford, Sir Clement Higham, Sir Thomas Read, and Sir George

Saville Four of the peers were: Lord Shrewsbury, Lord Crumwell, Lord Sheffield, and Lord Compton. Again, not one of these thirteen names suggests a future Shakespeare. The fifth peer was Roger Manners, Earl of Rutland.

Chapter VI.

The Early Plays

The First Folio must be regarded as the chief authority for the main range of Shakespeare's dramatic responsibility.

— Sir Ed. K. Chambers

1. *The traditional and the true chronology of the plays.* — 2. *Usual period of time between composition, performance and publication in Shakespeare's England* — 3. *"Titus Andronicus" an authentic play.* — 4. *"Love's Labour's Lost" not written by Shakespeare.* — 5. *Presumption of Rutland's authorship.*

THE inferences and conclusions of our preceding chapter will not satisfy orthodox Shakespeareans, but offer them a fresh opportunity to vindicate the truth of their creed by explaining the facts on the assumption of William Shakspeare's authorship. Elizabethan poets and playwrights were free to borrow, imitate, and even loot dramatic plots, devices and images from their fellow-dramatists. There was neither crime nor offense in it, and commentators have found hundreds of such echoes between Shakespeare and his friends or his rivals, Kyd, Marlowe, Peele, Webster, Ben Jonson, Chapman, and others. The only question with respect to the Cambridge comedies is, did Shakespeare imitate the boy, or

did the boy imitate Shakespeare? But as the college plays were composed and performed before Shakespeare wrote the really Shakespearean dramas, the orthodox scholars must show that echoes can resound before the horn is blown. In the mean time, we shall once more look at the poet through Stratfordian eyes in the admirable and strictly scholarly volume of Dr. Caroline F. E. Spurgeon, "Shakespeare's Imagery and what it tells us".

A poet's personality, says the learned writer, is revealed, even betrayed, through the images in his works. He may be and, in Shakespeare's case, is entirely objective in his dramatic characters, but in the red-hot Elizabethan drama images tumble from the mouths of the characters in the heat of the writer's feeling or passion, as they naturally surge into his mind. His imagery is thus a revelation of his mind, the objects and incidents he observed and remembered, and, perhaps most significant of all, those he does not observe and remember; and the result comes often as a complete surprise to the investigator. Dr. Spurgeon has studied the plays from that new angle systematically, scrupulously, and exhaustively and has illustrated her researches by excellent colored charts, indicating the exact number of various images in thirty-six dramas of the First Folio. She rightly describes her findings as "an absolute beacon in the skies" with regard to the poet's identity. The figures are:

Law	124
Sea and Ships	172
War and Weapons	192
Sports and Games	196
Classic Mythology	260
Drama	74

This is, indeed, a revelation of the poet's personality. These figures show what kind of man he was and what he was not, and the result is certainly a surprise from the standpoint of the tradition of Stratford. William Shakspeare was an actor; for twenty years or more, he lived on the stage or at the stage, of the stage and for the stage. Had he been a playwright, the images in his dramas, *as an absolute beacon in the skies*, would have revealed him as an actor. Words can lie; figures can not, if we are honest with them. A hundred cents are always neither more nor less than a dollar, and twenty shillings will never make a guinea. Has the reader ever met an actor who talked more about battles and shipwrecks than about the stage? — or who knew more about the Olympian gods than about playhouses and plays? Does a film producer think more of Diana, Hercules, and Helen of Troy than of Olivia de Haviland, Vivian Leigh, and Clark Gable? It may be said without exaggeration that Dr. Spurgeon has ground the Stratford story to dust "and thrown't against the wind".

As a true Stratfordian, Dr. Spurgeon does not perceive the inferences blazoned forth in her own colors. To her, William Shakspeare is still William Shake-speare. The orthodox ratiocination is illustrated in many pages of her work. *Love's Labour's Lost*, she says, "has an unusual number of nature images, actually the highest of the comedies — the writer was not long from Stratford — but they are either slight and general...or fantastic and artificial, full of euphuistic verbal play." This is indeed unexpected and passing strange — a countryman comes from the country and his country images are therefore vague, fantastic and unnatural. On another page, Dr. Spurgeon, discussing the sea images in the plays, concludes that the subjects which chiefly

interested the poet were "storms and wrecks and rocky shores, the boundless and fathomless depth of the ocean, the ebb and flow of the tide, the intruding tide pouring into a beach or covering over muddy flats". Muddy flats were of course familiar to any Londoner, but where could a man born in Stratford and living in London contemplate the boundless ocean, its storms, and the wrecks on rocky shores? As far as we know, he never approached the sea-side. We are reminded of Dr. Kittredge's remark: "We cannot think our own thoughts about Shakspeare," we recollect Sir Edmund Chambers' complaint about "minds that cannot hold an even course" in Shakespearean exploration, and we ask, is that wary or naive, discerning or blind criticism? But whatever it may be, it is certain that like Dr. Dover-Wilson, in his "Essential Shakespeare", Dr. Spurgeon, in her "Shakespeare's Imagery", has exposed the utter absurdity of the tradition of Stratford on Avon.

We have now to examine Rutland's authorship with regard to the time of composition of the earlier plays. This brings us to an apparently formidable contradiction. If the commonly accepted chronology of the dramas is correct, Rutland cannot be Shakespeare. He should then have accomplished about half the poet's life work when he was barely out of his teens. Moreover, under the orthodox calendar, the three pieces which display such rich Italian background and minutely accurate Lombardian and Venetian topography, *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, and *The Merchant of Venice*, were written before their author ever saw Milan, Mantua, Padua, and Venice. If this were true, we would without hesitation follow our resolution of bowing to sound evidence and, throwing away our notes, forget all about Roger Manners as a poet and a playwright.

But we have no reason for such a retreat. On the contrary, closer examination of the facts will show that we are standing on solid ground, and it is the orthodox writers who have woven their chronological fabric with traces of smallest spiders' web. This is a cardinal point. Our guides to it shall be the present highest Shakespearean authorities — Sir Edmund Chambers in England and Dr. G. L. Kittredge in America.

The composition of the earliest plays, the three parts of *King Henry VI*, is usually placed between 1590 and 1594. But all we really know about these dramas is that a play of *Henry VI* was performed at the Rose theatre in 1592; that the play printed in the First Folio under the title of *The First Part of King Henry the Sixth* was the joint work of four or five playwrights, and that the only scene written by Shakespeare, the scene in the Temple Garden, was added to the original text some time about 1599. The Second and the Third Parts of the Trilogy were published anonymously in 1594 and 1595 under the titles of *The First Part of the Contention betwixt the famous Houses of Yorke and Lancaster* and *The True Tragedy of Richard Duke of Yorke*. These two dramas are very rough, ungainly compositions, certainly not above the abilities of a beginner. Rutland was eighteen at the time of their publication.

The Comedy of Errors and *Two Gentlemen of Verona* were first printed in the First Folio. The *Comedy* is generally assigned to 1592 or 1593. The only fact relative to this is that a *Comedy of Errors* was performed at Gray's Inn in Dec. 1594. Whether this last play was the same as the *Comedy of Errors* of the Folio and particularly whether, if such was the case, the text we have is the same, are open questions. The date for *Two Gentlemen* is equally vague.

Malone and Lee assign it to 1591, Delius before 1591, Dowden between '92 and '93; Drake to 1595; Creighton to 1598. Pope could not understand why a play "of so unaffected a style should have been placed by experts among the first that Shakespeare wrote". *Romeo and Juliet* was first published in 1597. Delius assigned it to 1591, Chalmers to 1592, Drake to 1593, Malone and Fleay to 1596, Chambers to 1595, Dowden to 1597. Kittredge says the date of composition is uncertain. *Richard III* was first printed, anonymously, in 1597 and the next year under the pen-name of William Shake-speare. Kittredge assigns it to 1592, adding that there is no direct evidence to the contrary. But neither is there direct evidence for 1592. *The Merchant of Venice* was published in 1600. Its composition is assigned by Malone to 1591, by Hallewell-Phillips, Chambers and Kittredge to 1596; by Chalmers, Drake and others to 1598. No less than forty different dates have been suggested for the composition of *Midsummer Night's Dream*.

All these examples show that, up to the present, no evidence is available on the time of composition of the poet's earlier productions. Also, that there is a tendency to place these dramas at a period considerably remote from the time of their publication. This tendency is easily accounted for by the preconceived notion of the actor's authorship. The publication dates, if admitted to be close to the composition of the plays, would wreck the orthodox creed: a poet of thirty can no more write like a poet of sixteen, than a pup can bark like a dog. But the official chronology is contrary to the well known uses and interests of playwrights, theatre managers, and publishers of the time, which, apart from the laws of copyright, were, in substance, the same as today. The quartos were printed for sale and profit. A theatre man-

ager was, of course, interested in keeping a play from print as long as it attracted the public to the playhouse and paid its production, but a publisher's interest was exactly the opposite, and no man would think of printing a comedy six or seven years after its first appearance on the stage.

Before proceeding further with our chronological survey, we have to examine very briefly two particular plays, *Titus Andronicus*, and *Love's Labour's Lost*.

The exceptionally repellent action and dialogue in some scenes of *Titus Andronicus* have induced sundry critics to deny altogether its having been written by Shakespeare. But the editors of the First Folio must have had their reasons for giving it the honor of the poet's name. Our esthetic sensitiveness is no warrant for ignoring the fact. Dr. Kit-tredge writes: "Shakespeare was always prone to try experiments, and it would be strange if he had not written one out-and-out tragedy of blood when Kyd had shown how powerfully such things appealed to playgoers."

The question of *Love's Labour's Lost* is a different problem. The comedy carries the penmarks not of Shakespeare, but of another writer. It is open to the wise, though hidden from the vulgar, that the author was Francis Bacon. The first book published under the name of William Shakespeare was *Venus and Adonis*. This was in 1593. The next year, 1594, another poem, *The Rape of Lucrece*, was printed under the same name and was likewise dedicated to Southampton. No indiscreet questions as to the author seem to have been raised at the time, although no man of this name was known in London. We know now that both poems were signed "Francis Bacon". It was a ciphered signature; but it was the simplest of all possible ciphers, the same that is used today by schoolboys for their valentines—the Eliza-

bethan ABC: a = 1, b = 2, c = 3, . . . j and i = 9, as in *King Iohn*; . . . u and v = 20, as in *Vniuersity*. The last lines in *Venus and Adonis* are:

"Holding their course to Paphos where their *Queen*
Means to immur herself and not be *seen*."

Throughout the sixty-four stanzas of the poem, the words *Queen* and *seen* were spelt, as was then usual, with a final *e*: *Queene* and *seene*. Only the last words of the last two lines were misspelt in the now correct way, and in this, then the wrong spelling, the numerical value of these two words equals one hundred, that is, Francis Bacon, for *seen* adds to 41, and *Queen* to 59; and $41 + 59 = 100$.

The last two lines in *Lucrece* are:

"The Romans plausibly did giue consent
To Tarquin's euerlasting *banishment*"

The numerical value of the last word is: 2, 1, 13, 9, 18, 8, 12, 5, 13, 19, which again is a total of one hundred.

A word may be said here on the childish ignorance of the objection that these ciphered indications may be accidental. It is not inconceivable that, if we tossed up in the air a handful of eighteen font letters over a sheet of paper, these letters, in falling down, would form the name *William Shakespeare*. But though this is not inconceivable, we know that if we tried the experiment, such would never be the result. We do not consider it doubtful; we simply know that will never happen. It is the same with the above mentioned Bacon ciphers in the two poems. They could not have occurred by accident; they are the result of design, of careful preparation, and of artistic execution.

As remarked before, we may dislike these facts, but cannot deny them. And we find the same authorship claim in the 1598 Quarto of *Love's Labour's Lost*. It bore the name William Shakespere on the title-page; but on page F4 of the booklet, the following dialogue was inserted:

Page. What is AB spelt backward with the Horne on his head?

Pedant. Ba, puericia, with a Horne added.

Page. Ba, most silly sheepe, with a Horne: you hear his learning . . .

Orthodox critics offer no explanation of this riddle. To them, it is nothing but a meaningless jumble of words and letters. But it certainly is not; the meaning, first discovered by Durning Lawrence, and later fully explained by J. Denham Parsons, is perfectly clear. The horn on his head is the letter C written or printed upside down. It was used in this form in legal and in other books and manuscripts of the time as an abbreviation of the Latin preposition *con*. AB spelt backward with the horn on his head is Ba-con. The words "Ba, most silly sheepe" are printed on the *thirty-third* line from the top of the page and 33 is the numerical value of Bacon. These indications were reproduced twenty-five years later on the 136th page of the First Folio (136 = 103 Shakespeare + 33 Bacon) with other irrefutable cryptograms asserting Bacon's authorship. The historian, accordingly, has no choice but to recognize that, whosoever may be the author of the other thirty-five plays of the Folio, *Love's Labour's Lost* was written by Bacon. A child can read these simple figures.

We return to our chronology. We have seen that the time of composition of the earlier plays is quite uncertain.

On the contrary, the years of first publication are material facts. The dramas were printed in the following order of time:

<i>King John</i> , anonymously	1594
<i>The First Part of the Contention betwixt the two famous Houses of Yorke and Lancaster</i> , anonymously	1594
<i>Titus Andronicus</i> , anonymously	1594
<i>The Taming of a Shrew</i> , anonymously	1594
<i>The True Tragedy of Richard Duke of York</i> , anonymously	1595
<i>Richard III</i> , anonymously	1597
<i>Richard II</i> , anonymously	1597
<i>Romeo and Juliet</i> , anonymously	1597
<i>Henry IV, Part I</i> , anonymously	1598
<i>Love's Labour's Lost</i> , under the name of William Shakespeare	1598
<i>Henry V</i> , anonymously	1600
<i>Henry IV, Part II</i> , by William Shakespeare	1600
<i>Midsummer Night's Dream</i> , by William Shakespeare	1600
<i>The Merchant of Venice</i> , by William Shakespeare	1600
<i>Much Ado About Nothing</i> , by William Shakespeare	1600

In 1598 and 1599, four originally anonymous plays were issued under the *nom de plume* of William Shakespeare the Spear-shaker, *Hastavibrans*, and several following editions were printed under the same pseudonym. *Richard III* had six editions under the name of Shakespeare; *Richard II*, five; *Romeo and Juliet*, two, and *Henry IV*, seven. The other dramas were published under the name which be-

came the great name, William. Shakespeare; *the actor's name had never before been spelt in that way*. So we have before us three different groups of facts: (1) that Shakespeare's earliest plays were published anonymously; (2) that many Quartos of his plays were published under the *nom de plume* of William the Spear-shaker; and (3) that other plays were published under the spurious name which Bacon had used as a *nom de plume* for his two poems and for *Love's Labour's Lost*. Had the actor's name been previously spelt in the same way, the burden of proving that it was a pseudonym would be on the sceptics; as it was not, the burden of proof rests on the orthodox writers. This is a material element of the controversy, and they have three questions to answer here: *Why did Shakspeare the actor conceal his name? Why did he misspell it with a hyphen? Why did he sign, 'n code, one comedy, and two of his poems with the name of Francis Bacon?*

The plays that followed, *Titus Andronicus*, *The First Part of the Contention* and *The True Tragedy*, so far as they indicate the progress of the poet's work, are perfectly consistent with Rutland's assumed authorship. When compared with the corresponding time of life of other presumable "Shakespeares", — much older men than he — they must be considered as corroborating it. The exuberant but imperfect early dramas are the creations of a young head, not of a riper mind. An old man may jabber like a fool, but cannot lisp like a child. Neither Shakspeare the actor, nor Bacon, nor William Stanley, Earl of Derby, nor Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford, were in their teens when *Richard III*, *Richard II*, *Romeo and Juliet* and *Henry V* were published for the first time; Rutland was barely twenty — yet in his waxing period, still *im Werden*. He was just twenty-four when the

three great comedies, *Twelfth Night*, *As You Like It*, and *Much Ado about Nothing*, each one of them full of the unalloyed vigor of early manhood, first came to be known. These four or five years, 1596-1600, are precisely the period of Shakespeare's intense creative activity when hosts of immortal visions gushed forth from under his pen in an impatient gorgeous pageant, unrivaled and inimitable, and yet still to be surpassed in his later titanic works.

Chapter VII.

Rutland in Italy

"Shakespeare's local descriptions are far more true and accurate than the knowledge of his commentators, translators and critics."

— *Theod. Elze*

"It is difficult for those who have explored the University of Padua to resist the persuasion that the poet himself had been one of the travelers who had come from afar to look upon its seats of learning, if not to partake of its ingenious studies."

— *Ch. Knight*

On the way to Padua. — Milan, Mantua, Verona — Great sights apparently unnoticed by the poet; insignificant local landmarks accurately described — The University of Padua — Local features in "Two Gentlemen" — Rich pictures of Venice in "Shylock" — The poet's technique in poetic description admired by orthodox critics — A call to the tradition.

IN SEPTEMBER 1595 Roger Manners obtained the Queen's permission "to pass over the seas". He left England in company with Lord Thomas Burgh. We can trace him through Heidelberg on the Rhine, Augsburg and Rouen to Paris, where he stayed for some time. From there he went to Geneva and across the Alps to Italy. The beauties of na-

ture and the great works of men were the same then that they are now. But in those happy days of carriages and horseback riding, though less space was covered, more things were seen and noted. Every town along the road meant a halt for a few days or weeks.

The first Italian city on the highway to Padua was Milan. The famous Dome was but half built; Leonardo's *Last Supper* on the wall of Santa Maria delle Grazie, now faded out beyond recognition, was but a hundred years old and in the full glory of the master's own colors. In the celebrated Casa Leoni Rutland may have seen Correggio's famous picture of *Jupiter and Io*.

We'll show the Io as she was a maid,
And how she was beguiled and surprised,
As lively painted as the deed was done...

Taming of the Shrew, Induction.

A quarter of a mile from the Porta Venezia of Milan stood the Hospital and the church of San Gregorio.

Where meet we?
At St Gregory's well.

Two Gentlemen of Verona.

In the same comedy, Valentine is banished from Milan and flees toward Mantua. He is captured by outlaws in a wood outside Milan. There are no woods around Milan today. But in Shakespeare's time there was a fine forest north of the city. Two highways ran between Milan and Mantua, one of them, the North-Eastern route, along a chain of mountains.

and meet with me
Upon the rising of the mountain-foot
That leads toward Mantua.

From Mantua the way to Padua lay through Verona. Here, as today, the traveler would be taken or would himself stroll to the old market-place, the gorgeous tomb of Ca Grande della Scala, and the Roman Amphitheatre. Near the Amphitheatre were the remains of a Roman temple dedicated to Janus and, on the old Roman road close by, a marble arch in honor of the god. "Now, by two-headed Janus," says Salarino in *The Merchant of Venice*.

We are surprised by a line in *Othello*: "The ship is there, a Veronessa." Why should a Venetian ship be called a Veronese? The answer is simple. Verona lay in the Venetian borders and furnished war galleys to the Republic. Would Shakspeare of Stratford know the fact? Who in London would have thought of telling him about it?

The little town of Bergamo lay on the way between Verona and Padua. It is far away from the sea, and too high in the hills to have river or canal communications with these cities. We are puzzled by a passage in *The Taming of the Shrew*. Old Vincentio, arriving at Padua, discovers his servant Tranio masquerading as his son Lucenzo. The valet treats him with supreme arrogance: "Sir, you seem a sober ancient gentleman by your habit. Why, Sir, what 'cerns it you if I wear pearl and gold? I thank my good father, I am able to maintain it."

Vin. Thy father? O, villain: he is a sail-maker in Bergamo.

Having no river and no canals, Bergamo had no use for boats and sails. Why should Shakspeare the actor make his impostor a sailmaker? Why did the poet? Our commentators explain the curious remark. The soil in the neighborhood of Bergamo was specifically rich in the hemp of which

sails were made, and Bergamo was renowned for its sailing industry. Who in London would know about that or care to hear about it?

In "fair Padua, nursery of Arts" Rutland studied law. The University was one of the favorite centers of learning on the continent. Among its learned men were Galileo, Giordano Bruno, Fabrizio d'Aquapendente, the famous anatomist; Joseph Justus Scaliger, the greatest scholar and literary dictator of his day; Jean Baptiste van Helmont, as much a scientist as an astrologer; and Ottonello Discalzio, a lawyer of great repute, whom commentators identify with the learned old Bellario in *The Merchant of Venice*. As a center of progressive knowledge, the city had no rival in Italy. It was in Rome, not in Padua, that Galileo had to abjure his science, and in Venice, not in Padua, Giordano Bruno was burned at the stake. As a treasury of art, Padua was scarcely inferior to Rome or Florence. The Dome of San Antonio, the churches of S. Sofia, S. Giustina degli Eremitani, the Oratorio di San Giorgio were jewel caskets of marble and mosaics; the Palazzo del Podesta, the town hall, the Palazzo del Capitano, the residence of the Venetian governor, the Palazzo Cornaro were painted and gilded with frescoes by Giotto, Mantegna, Domenico Campagnola and Paolo Veronese. On guard at Il Santo, the shrine of the city's patron, stood Donatello's bronze condottiere Erasmo da Narni Gattamelata on his powerful steed. A cultured young man, richly gifted by nature, and educated in the true spirit of the Renaissance, could not be blind to all the glories of science and art in the city; and we are not surprised that a modern English writer should marvel at the air of Padua and the breath of its University in *The Taming of the Shrew*.

We shall now analyse more carefully two of the earlier comedies laid in Italy, *Two Gentlemen of Verona* and *The Merchant of Venice*. Of these two the earlier is the less colorful and also the poorest in dramatic effectiveness. It is never acted in our days, and we would not expect to discover in it a vein of gold. But the comparatively insignificant little play reveals much beyond our expectations. In cool logic, it is conclusive evidence of two cardinal points: first, that Shakspeare, the actor, could not have written it; and secondly, that the man who wrote it must have traveled or lived for some time in Northern Italy. It is indeed astonishing how many links of evidence this single comedy offers us and how more and more convincing they become when viewed from different angles of literary and historical criticism. The general background and the local details of the comedy are exceptionally significant. It is common knowledge that the poet took little care of historical and geographical accuracy in his dramas. The actors of the Italianate plays have Italian names; occasionally they utter Italian phrases; and sometimes they refer to some local buildings or other landmarks. But these scenic allusions are quite casual and the details too insignificant to evoke any real pictures before the playgoers. Our best critics are positive in this respect. Some of them say that Verona in *Romeo and Juliet* is not Verona, but Stratford; others assert that the forest near Mantua is the forest of Arden in Warwickshire. These remarks are partly true, but in another sense entirely wrong. It is hard to see in what way the city of Verona in the dialogue is more like Stratford on Avon in Warwickshire than Kenilworth or Coventry in the same county, or Guildford in Surrey, or Bottesford near Belvoir Castle in Leicestershire. It is equally hard to perceive in what way the forest near

Mantua is more like the Forest of Arden than like the New Forest, or Epping Forest, or Sherwood Forest, of which the Earl of Rutland was Lord Lieutenant and Keeper. As to the two gentlemen, they are indeed not more Italian than English, but also not more English than French or Spanish. It is their actions in the story, not their airs and fashions which suggest that they are drawn after two noblemen of Elizabeth's court.

Let us assume the orthodox standpoint. An actor at the Rose theatre or the Curtain is working on the scenario of a new play. He sets the action in Verona, Milan and Mantua. He never went to Italy, and no travelers' books are available in London. The original stories from which he took the plot, also give him no information on Lombardy. But he need not be concerned about that: his audience is more ignorant than he. He introduces in the plot a forest with outlaws somewhere between Milan and Mantua. In what direction should the forest be located? A glance at the map will show him that Mantua lies east of Milan, and there is a highway due east between the two cities. If by some happy chance he has the opportunity of questioning a man who has made the journey, such a man will tell him that the plain east of Milan is infested by murderous bandits. This is exactly what he is looking for in his scenario. The more dangerous the road, the better for the stage effect. Obviously, if the actors have to travel from Milan to Mantua or Verona, they will be shown leaving the city by the Eastern gate. We open the book. Valentine is banished from Milan and has to fly to Verona. He asks Proteus' servant to advise Speed, his own servant, to meet him at the city's gate. Of course, it will be the Eastern gate. We read:

Val. I pray thee, Launce, an if thou seest my boy,
Bid him make haste and meet me at the North gate.

This surely must be a misprint. But in another passage of the same scene Launce gives the message to Valentine's Speed:

Launce. . . . thy master stays for thee at the North gate.

A misprint again? No, it is what Shakespeare wrote, and what he meant. In the fifth act the Duke of Milan dispatches Proteus in pursuit of his daughter Silvia who is on the way to Mantua (V, 2):

Duke. . . . meet with me
Upon the rising of the mountain-foot
That leads towards Mantua . . .

The Eastern highroad lay through a plain, and it was the Northern highway in the direction of Bergamo and the Brenta that indeed lay along a mountain chain. So it is quite evident that Shakespeare really meant Valentine and later Silvia and her companion Eglamour to leave Milan by the North Gate. We do not take the train at King's Cross when we are going to Gravesend or to Chatham. Nor shall we probably ever hear of a gentleman flying from Boston to San Francisco over New Orleans or Montreal. And we cannot imagine William Shakspeare introducing so strange a notion in a play written for an audience of mentally sane people.

And yet there was a perfectly sound reason for the seemingly insane idea. There were bands of robbers both eastward and northward of Milan, but the high road due East was much more dangerous and travelers preferred the

less hazardous route due North through the forest of Monza and the river Lambro and further on by Bergamo and Brescia. Even in later days, this route, the less dangerous of the two routes, was dotted at every stone-throw with wooden and stone crosses marking the graves of murdered voyagers. Writing, as he did, a romantic comedy, Shakspeare, the actor, would have no conceivable reason for selecting the safer direction. But the real Shakespeare, who had been warned against the perils of the direct route, must have left the city by the North Gate. He wrote what he had seen.

To return to the actor-playwright. Apart from the dangerous robber-forest near Mantua, his plot requires a wood not far from Milan, where fugitives from the city may escape the pursuit of those from whom they flee. How far from Milan that wood or forest should be situated, is of no consequence, since the patrons of the Rose know nothing about it and will accept anything. So it may be one, two, or three miles or leagues or more. Shakespeare chooses three leagues.

Silvia. go on, good Eglamour!

... I fear I am attended by some spies.

Egla. Fear not: the forest is not three leagues off,...

Two Gent., V., 1.

We should not be less complacent than the galleries and the pit in a London playhouse; but we are. Indiscreetly, inquisitively, we ask, "Why three leagues?" And the answer is, because it is the truth. Today, the neighborhood of Milan, like the rest of Northern Italy, is a country of gardens. But in the sixteenth century there was a wood outside the North Gate, of which a few parts are still extant under the name of the Old Park of Monza, and this wood began almost

exactly nine English miles or three leagues from the present Porta Venezia, the old North-gate of the play.

It is an elementary rule of rhetoric that familiar images and proper names are more impressive than general terms. A circus and a square are as much geometrical figures as localities. But "We meet at Piccadilly Circus," or "I'll see you at Washington Square," are talking pictures of London and New York. Shakspeare, the playwright, knows the old rule and the virtue of material objects in giving a more vivid sense of reality to his audience. For this purpose he wants to place some sort of landmark outside the North Gate of Milan. He has the choice between the various buildings or other structures which are commonly found not far from the outskirts of a large city: a castle, a monastery, an almshouse, a nobleman's villa, or he may prefer some minor landmark: a shrine, a decorative milestone, a cross marking a murder on the high road. For some reason he chooses a well. Again, in order to impress more reality upon his patrons, he gives a name to this well. What name shall it be? He selects the name of a saint. Who is to be the saint? A man or a woman, St. Mary, St. Margaret, St. Peter, St. Paul, St. Benedict? Or England's patron, St. George? Of the five or six hundred saints in the Roman-Catholic calendar, Shakspeare chooses a name hardly ever heard in England and not much oftener in Lombardy — St. Gregory's well. Why?

There was, as we have said, outside the Northern Gate of the city a huge building — the *Ospedale San Gregorio*. and this Hospital was surrounded by a quadrangular wall and a moat with running water which was supposed to have a miraculous healing virtue. There was also a well-known

Fontana di San Gregorio. The Hospital exists no more, but the two adjoining streets are still called *V'ia di San Gregorio* and *Via Lazzaretto* — Hospital Street. A contemporary chronicler described the main road from the city to the Hospital as "*una regia strada che serve, principalmente a' Passeggi de' cittadini*" — a promenade of the citizens and in all probability a common meeting place — "at St. Gregory's well." It seems strange that the poet should have neglected the quite exceptional edifice of the Hospital and only mentioned an object so common in Italy as a well. Both in the lines just quoted and in the preceding passage, we note that the strictly accurate local features have not the slightest stage virtue: as far as the audience was concerned, four leagues or two leagues from the North gate would have been as good as three, and St. Severino's or St. Vitale's well as good as St. Gregory's. Again Rutland wrote what he had seen. Shakspeare could not have written it.

We have no information about Rutland's studies at the University. He was too young and too independent to be over-assiduous at classes. Unless he was abnormally different from his fellow-students, he went to Venice more than once. He strolled under the golden porticos of San Marco, under the arches of the Ducal Palace, crossed the Ponte del Diabolo, turned the corner of the Via degli Assassini. He probably saw the Doge boarding the Bucentoro in grand state. Rambling in the ghetto, he must have observed groups of long-robed, voluble, black and red-haired young *mercataintes*, excitedly commenting at the Merceria and on the old bridge over the Canal Grande on the exchange rates of shekels, sequins and ducats on the Rialto and on the risks of over-sea trade.

Why, yet it lives there unchecked that Antonio hath a ship
of rich lading wrecked on the narrow seas: the Goodwins I
think they call the place.

what notes and garments he doth give thee
Bring them, I pray thee, with imagined speed
Unto the *tranect*, to the common ferry
Which trades to Venice.

Tranect is a misprint for *traject*. In Florio's *Worlde of Wordes*, the Italian *traghetto* is explained as a "ferry, a passage, or a gozell over from shore to shore". Shakespeare translated *traghetto* by an expressly coined word, *traject*, and, as the Londoners in the galleries and in the pit of the Theatre or the Curtain would not understand the latinism, he explained the new word by the common word, a *ferry*, in his text. Today, much of all this is materialized for us in the stage setting; but then, it had to be conveyed in the dialogue, and it was so conveyed. The drama is indeed saturated with the air of the lagoon, and if we prefer natural causes and effects to supernatural, we must realize that Shakespeare knew Venice not as if he had seen it, but because he had seen it.

Two lines in *Othello* have long puzzled our commentators. Having reported to her father, the Senator Brabantio, Desdemona's flight from home, Yago directs the pursuit: "Lead to the Sagittary the raised search"; and at the Council's meeting the Doge gives the order:

Send for the lady to the Sagitarry....

Who in London knew what was the Sagitarry? Our critics cannot agree on the matter after three centuries of research. Could an actor of the Curtain or the Globe be better informed? The Sagitarry was either a private dwelling or an inn, where Desdemona took refuge after her flight, and also a dark and narrow street, leading from the Piazza San Marco in the heart of the city to the Campo San Fantino outside it. There was nothing of the slightest interest in this dingy lane. A visitor might pass by it or walk in it, but would certainly not think of describing it to a Londoner, because there was nothing to describe. It is mentioned in an old book of Marco Antonio Sabellico, "*De Situ Urbis Venetae*", where we read: "*Duplici inde via in Divi Marci itur aream, laeva per sagittarium vicum, dextera pontibus duobus,*" i.e., St. Mark's shrine can be reached [from the Campo San Fantino] by two roads, on the left by the Sagittarius' street and on the right over two bridges. Did the actor order the book from Milan or Venice to study the background of his drama?

The poet's remarkable knowledge of Italian topography, his vivid pictures of Italian scenery, and his accuracy in describing Italian everyday life have long been recognised by our best Italian scholars. But, in the study of our mental activities and their external manifestations, negative circumstances are often not less significant than positive facts, and more particularly so when the omission is contrary to human experience in the common occurrences of life.

"Think of the remarkable incident of the dog," said Sherlock Holmes to Lestrade.

"There was no incident with the dog," exclaimed the puzzled officer of Scotland Yard.

"That was the remarkable incident," said Sherlock Holmes.

How would we describe Venice? Could we avoid the inevitable Palazzo Ducale, The Dome of St. Mark with the absurd bronze horses, the twin pillars on the Piazzetta crowned with the city's patrons, St. Theodore with his Crocodile and St. Mark with his Lion? Byron wrote:

I saw from out the waves her structures rise,
As from the stroke of the enchanter's wand.
A thousand years their cloudy wings expand
Around me, and a dying glory smiles
O'er the far times when many a subject land
Look'd to the *winged Lion's* marble piles,
Where Venice sat in state, throned on her
hundred isles.

We find in Shakespeare a Winged Cupid, a winged Messenger, winged heels, winged thoughts, winged fowls, a winged vengeance... No Winged *Lion*! We find a hungry lion, a rough lion, the Nemean Lion, a raving lion, an awless lion, a fangless, an imperious, a ramping lion; no *Winged Lion*. — no St. Mark's Lion. Not in all the thirty-six or thirty-seven plays. Not in the five acts of *The Merchant of Venice*; nor in the five acts of *Othello*. Rome without the Pope; English drama without Shakespeare. A schoolboy, thinking of Venice, would see the stones and bronzes above mentioned. Shakespeare seems to have forgotten all about them.

How do we see London from Paris or from New York? We see the Houses of Parliament, Nelson's Column, the Tower. But a Londoner would direct us from Ludgate Hill to The

Monument and from Great St. Helen's to Staples Inn in High Holborn. This is the way Shakespeare paints Venice. He omits the great sights and talks of insignificant spots and corners. It is not that he knew less of it, but that he had seen more. Antonio, Bassanio, Portia and Gratiano speak as real Venetians, not as globe-trotters with their guide-books in hand. As remarked by a critic of unquestionable authority, Prof. Granville-Barker, it is "the Venice of royal merchants trading to the gorgeous East, of Jews in their gabardines, and of splendid gentlemen rustling in silks; the city that stood for culture and manners and the luxury of civilization; and this — without one word of description". A hundred years ago an English critic wrote in the *Edinburgh Review*: "In *The Merchant of Venice* the poetical elevation is obtained by a migration into a foreign and southern region. The tideless lagoon of the Adriatic reflects the Venetian palaces, the pine trees and fountains, the terraces of Portia's villa, and the deep-blue sky of the Italian clime." Karl Elze said: "This drama is impregnated, in an inimitable manner, with a thoroughly Italian air, with an aroma of Italy, more readily felt than analysed and defined. It is fresh and true to nature to a degree that cannot be surpassed."

Let us again take the ruts to Stratford on Avon. How could William Shakspeare have achieved all that and how could he know the names of insignificant landmarks scattered about the little towns and the city suburbs of Lombardy and Venetia? The orthodox answer is simple—genius. We grant the absurdity and concede that the actor could and did accomplish the impossible. But then, we ask, if he could and did paint Milan, Mantua, Padua and Venice without having seen them, why not Verona? There is not a speck of Veronese background in *Romeo and Juliet*. Even the names

of the two enemy houses, Montecchi and Capuletti, are English — Montagues and Capulets; even the earthquake is not in Italy, but in England. *Why was the actor's genius paralysed by the name "Verona"?* To us, the reason is simple. There is no Veronese color in the tragedy set in Verona, because Rutland wrote *Romeo and Juliet* before he went to Italy. But unless the orthodox writers are willing to drop their banner, they must explain the inexplicable exception! If they cannot, their cause is lost.

Chapter VIII.

The Birth of a Legend

"Richard II's fate always roused in Queen Elizabeth an especially active sense of dread."

— Sir Sidney Lee

Rutland's apprenticeship in war — The Queen incensed by "Richard II"—Happy concurrence of circumstances—The birth of the legend of Stratford on Avon — Palladis Tamia — William Shakspeare becomes William Shakespeare — The omission of the Trilogy of "K. Henry VI" and the reason thereof — Two questions to orthodox writers.

SHAKESPEARE'S dramatic realm is essentially romance. But few Shakespeare lovers will deny that in two connections the poet was a supreme realist — in sport and, on land or sea, in war. A great poet can describe a sea storm, but none have approached Shakespeare's truth and power in such descriptions. Many poets of older times have painted fine pictures of war. But none of them has ever given so much of his talent to its toils and miseries as he did in *Henry V*, *Coriolanus*, and *Antony and Cleopatra*. Where did he learn them? Had he lived through them?

Rutland was barely twenty years of age when he returned from Italy. He had been at the Universities, and had

seen "the wonders of the world abroad"; he was little inclined to seek preferment at a court, fawning on an unattractive and exacting old woman. It was time for him to see "the wars, to try his fortune there"

The Queen had been prevailed upon to resume an attempt against Spain. A fleet lay at Plymouth early in June 1597 under the Lord Admiral Thomas Howard, the Earl of Essex and Sir Walter Raleigh. It consisted of about one hundred and twenty ships, English and Dutch, and a force of some six thousand men. Essex, warmed by his recent successful raid on Cadiz, was sanguine and impatient for action. His object was an attack on Ferrol in the Azore Islands and the capture of the Spanish fleet then homeward bound from India. The expedition had for some time been held up by unfavorable weather and want of supplies. The temptation was too strong for Rutland; he secretly left London and joined his friend and patron.

"I shall stay here the forehorse to a smock,
Creaking my shoes on the plain masonry,
Till honour be bought up and no sword worn,
But one to dance with By heaven! I'll steal away."

Alls' Well that Ends Well, II, 1.

He must have anticipated resistance, had he asked the pleasure of the Queen who at the time was much less favorably disposed toward Essex than before. Southampton was with the Earl, and Elizabeth could hardly be pleased to see another rising young nobleman less anxious to bask in the sunlight of her favor than to serve one who did not seem to care much how he served her. From Plymouth Rutland wrote to Sir Robert Cecil that he was "infinitely glad the Queen was not acquainted with his going, for he would

not have been stayed for anything in the world, so great was his desire to know and see the wars". He was probably advised of the Queen's displeasure, for in another letter to Cecil about the same time he wrote: "I pray you present my service to the Queen, hoping she will be pleased with my determination to take this journey, wherein I desire to show my duty to her and my love to my country. I have taken with me your trusty servant, Andrew Bussy, who desires to be a soldier rather than of any other profession, a spirit agreeable with my own."

I am a soldier,
A name that in my thoughts becomes me best.

Henry V, III, 3.

The spirit was good, but it led to a double offence in the Queen's jealous eye — a disregard of her authority and a preference for Essex.

The expedition was not an easy one. The ships had scarcely left the English coast when "there suddenly arose a fierce and tempestuous storm full in their teeth, continuing for some days with so great violence that every one was enforced to look to his own safety". The ships were separated. The Admiral with fifty-seven sails pursued his course; Essex and the rest came back to Falmouth. Early in August the fleet again assembled in Plymouth. On the night of August 13th Essex wrote to Sir Robert Cecil: "The wind flatters me now at East, but it shows very little wind. If it continue but these three hours till it be day, I will be at work for life to get the fleet out." The day, however, brought a fresh storm with it. Essex asked Anthony Bacon to make it known in London how violently the wind and storms both drove him back and then kept him in, though he strove

against them to the utmost. "My ship," he wrote to Sir Edward Reynolds from aboard the *Due Repulse*, was "falling asunder, having a leak that we pumped eighty tons of water a day out of her, her main and foremasts cracked and most of her beams broken and rent, besides the opening of all her seams." Eventually they sailed through storm and tempest. On the 23rd in the Bay of Biscay Sir George Carew's ship, the *St. Mathew*, having lost her bow-sprit and foremast and cut off her sails and tackle, was left behind. Her valiant commander remained on board to take the fortune of his ship. A few days later, Sir Walter Raleigh with the *St. Andrew* and the *Dreadnaught* was separated from the main fleet. He wrote to Cecil that for ten days he never so much as came to bed or cabin in his torn ship.

Such and the like were young Rutland's experiences on board the *Due Repulse* and the *Warspite*. He and his companions saw more than once the sea in its fury, "how it chafes, how it rages, how it takes up the shore". (*The Winter's Tale*, III, 3.) He saw the ship tossed on the ocean, "now boring the wind with her main mast, and anon swallowed with yest and froth, as you'd thrust a cork into a hog's head". (*Ibid.*) He heard the boatswain's cry: "Down with the topmast! yare! Lower! lower! Bring her to try with the main course Lay her a-hold! . . . Let her two courses. Off to sea again!" (*The Tempest*, I, I.)

More than once he had good reason to say he would give a thousand furlongs of sea for an acre of barren ground and, in hours of respite, the work done and the danger past, he would listen to the seamen humming among them:

The master, the swabber, the boatswain and I,
The gunner and his mate
Lov'd Mall, Meg and Marian and Marjorie.

But none of us car'd for Kate. For she had a tongue with a tang,
Would cry to a sailor go hang;
She loved not the savour of tar nor of pitch,
Yet a tailor might scratch her where 'ere she'd itch.
Then to sea, boys, and let her go hang!

The Tempest, II, 2.

On September 15th, Raleigh managed to join Essex off the Island of Tercera. They took Fiall, sacked and burned the high part of the town, which was held to be impregnable, and made the rest of the islands, as Pike, St. George's, and Graciosa, obedient to the General's service. A small detachment of three or four of the Queen's galleys and some small merchant ships lit upon the Spanish fleet of about five and thirty sail returning from India "laden with treasure", some of them great war galleons. Essex chased them, took one of them and sunk her. A few others were also taken, but the greater part of the fleet escaped and drove into Tercera, which the English found unassailable. Some time later they took and sacked the town of Villafranca.

Rutland's name does not appear in the reports of his companions in arms. He was among them all the time, but whether he took part in all or any of these encounters, and if so, whether he showed more of his breast or his back to the Spaniards, we do not know. Some readers may imagine him as fighting by the side of his friends; the sceptic will say it may have been so or otherwise. In any case, he stored a good knowledge of the wars on land and on the seas. "Those who have had some first-hand experience of war," says an orthodox critic of Shakespeare, "will recognize that he knew more of soldiers and soldiering than he was likely to have picked up listening to the unavoidable Elizabethan sea-dog by the inevitable tavern fire." The fleet

returned to Plymouth late in October 1597. For some time afterward our information about the young Earl is scant. In February 1598 he was admitted as student to Gray's Inn. In the same year he is mentioned as having stayed with the Queen after supper till twelve o'clock, from which it may be inferred that Elizabeth was not unfavorable to him at that time.

Our story now brings us to the birth of the legend of Stratford on Avon.

Up to the year 1598 all the plays subsequently attributed to our poet were published anonymously, and Shakespeare as a dramatist was unknown in London. In that year new editions of *Richard III* and *Richard II* were printed with the name *Shake-speare* on the title page. In the same year a little book was brought out by a Master of Arts of Cambridge, Francis Meres, under the title "Palladis Tamia or Wit's Treasury". It was a collection of aphorisms on philosophy, morals and literature. For some reason, there was inserted in the booklet an independent essay under the title of "A comparative discourse of the English poets with the Latin and Italian poets". The following famous lines appeared in this essay: "As Plautus and Seneca are accounted the best for Comedy and Tragedy among the Latines, so Shakespeare among ye English is the most excellent in both kinds for the stage: for Comedy witness his *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, his *Errors*, his *Love's Labour's Lost*, his *Love's Labour's Wonne*, his *Midsummer Night's Dreame*, and his *Merchant of Venice*; for Tragedy his *Richard II*, *Richard III*, *Henry IV*, *King John*, *Titus Adronicus* and his *Romeo and Juliet*." This was the first time that a claim to authorship of the dramas was made in the name of William Shakespeare, although not by him. The poet himself, whoever he

may have been, never claimed the plays as his own. Shakespeare of Stratford never did.

Edgar Poe, the creator of the art of deduction and detection, has taught us that, in investigating a mystery, we should ask not so much "what has occurred" as "what has occurred that has never occurred before". Following this good rule, we note that in the first two plays published under the great name (the Quartos of *Richard III* and *Richard II*) it was spelled not as the actor's name, *Shakespeare*, or *Shaksper*, or *Shaxper*, or as any other common surname, but as manifestly a *nom de plume*, *Shake-speare*, the Lance-Shaker. At the same time, we ask, was there in 1598 any particular reason for giving an author's name to the plays?

Richard II had been acted in London for some time when the Queen's attention was in some way drawn to this play. The anonymous Quarto of 1597 or the one that bore the name with a hyphen, or perhaps both, came into her hands. She chose to think or was made to believe that the drama was maliciously directed against her. The form *Shake-speare* plainly indicated that for some reason the author considered it advisable to conceal his name. This was adding fuel to the fire. The drama contained several passages, which to Elizabeth's morbidly suspicious mind must indeed have appeared little short of high treason. The King's misfortunes were represented as retribution for his depredations in connection with the Crown's lands. When Richard found his coffers were grown light with too great a court and liberal largesses, he soon devised a means to refill them: "We are enforced to farm our royal Realm, The revenue whereof shall furnish us For our affairs in hand." The monopolies lavished by Elizabeth on her fav-

orites had grown to an abuse as intolerable as that of Richard II and the Queen knew too well how loud and impatient were the complaints against her. She also knew how dangerous and widespread were the activities of her catholic enemies in England and in Scotland. She had been excommunicated by the Pope and her subjects were released from their oath of allegiance to her. She heard constantly of treason, conspiracies and attempts against her life. Shakespeare's cruel scene of the lawful King's abdication in favour of the rebellious Bolingbroke was suppressed by the licensers, but it had been performed on the stage before the publication of the book. Besides, there were other scenes, such as the King's arrest, his many humiliations, and his murder, which in the Queen's eyes must have appeared not less malignant and seditious. Such scenes are dangerous to monarchies. They make men think too much. They nourish the "cockle of rebellion, insolence, sedition", and "therefore are they very dangerous". Elizabeth Tudor was a woman of many accomplishments, but meekness was not among them. We have several pictures of her in colors and others in ink. Sir Walter Raleigh described her "riding like Alexander, hunting like Diana, walking like Venus, the gentle wind blowing her fair hair about her pure cheeks like a nymph; sometime sitting in the shade like a goddess; sometime singing like an angel; sometime playing like Orpheus..." An outsider's impression was different: "That woman," wrote the Spanish ambassador, "is possessed with ten thousand devils." The rack and the stakes at Tyburn, the block in the Tower and the dead heads grinning over London Bridge had their own tale to tell. "Elizabeth," says a contemporary chronicler, "could not cross the Thames without recognizing the features of gentlemen whom she had consigned to the axe or

the halter." Another chronicler reports that one day, "holding Biron, the French ambassador, by the hand, she pointed to a number of heads that were planted on the Tower and told him that it was thus that they punished traitors in England... She coolly recounted to him the names of all her subjects whom she had brought to the block." Still another visitor asserted that he counted on London Bridge no less than three hundred heads of persons who had been executed for high treason. Such a woman's wrath bode no good to the author of *Richard II*. She may have heard some perfidious or indiscreet remarks; she may even have been advised of the author's name by some "suborned informer". If not, her own suspicions would prompt her to look around Essex in order to detect the invidious writer. The Queen's conversation at a later period with William Lambert, as reported by the latter, is very significant here: "I am Richard II," she cried, "know ye not that?" And then came the angry words: "This tragedy was played forty times in open streets and houses." She ordered Bacon to search the book for treason.

Rutland's position was a precarious one. He had already dared the Queen's displeasure by his open friendship with the ill-starred Essex. He now attacked or seemed to attack her personally and with singular persistency, for *King Richard III* was not less offensive than *King Richard II* and *King John* was worse.. It was the Tower and perhaps the axe for the author. His friends knew it well. The simplest way to divert the Queen's suspicions from the real offender and to sooth her fears, was to bring forth as the author a man whose social standing was too low, even too contemptible, to entertain the august apprehensions and to show at the same time that even that man was manifestly

innocent of any seditious designs. Fortunately, by a singular concurrence of circumstances, the means for the purpose were at hand. Three or four years ago the two poems, *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece* had been published under the name of William Shakespeare. About the same time, an actor of the Curtain and the Globe of the name William Shakspeare or Shaxper had become a sort of jack-of-all-trades around his playhouse. So William Shakespeare *the dramatist* was born and christened, who never lived in flesh and blood and never shall die in fame. Francis Meres' little book was then ready for print. The "Comparative Discourse of the English poets" was slipped into the text and the passage quoted above supplied the garbled information devised to throw the Queen off the scent. William Shakspeare the actor assumed the part of William Shakespeare the dramatist and acted it discreetly and well. Which is the best way to act a part? Why, to play it so that nobody would suspect you of acting it. What is the best way to keep a secret? Why, not to let people think there is a secret. Shakspeare let the rumor grow around his theatre. If anybody asked, who was that William Shakespeare, the ready answer would be — William Shakspeare of the Globe. Probably nobody did ask, because most certainly nobody cared. Behind the footlights undoubtedly a few men did know part of the truth, perhaps all of it. But these few would keep it well because not one of them would deprive his playhouse of its wealthy patron.

An interesting point has been raised by some critics in connection with Meres' list. Why were the three parts of *K. Henry VI* omitted? The reason is simple. There was not less seditious matter in the *Second* and the *Third Parts of King Henry VI* than in the two *Richards*. The *Second*

Part featured Jack Cade's rebellion; the *Third Part* — the deposition and murder of King Henry. In *Richard II*, it was a faction against a King; in *Henry VI*, the people against the King and two Kings denouncing one another as felons, usurpers and traitors. The Trilogy could not be less harmful in Elizabeth's eyes than the other two plays. And there was another and more weighty reason for keeping the three plays out of notice. As before said, the Queen's misgivings would naturally tend against Essex's faction. *Henry VI* could not fail to confirm her suspicions; nay, to direct them straightway to the man she was after through the name of the youngest son of the Duke of York, Edmund, Earl of Rutland, who was slain by Clifford in the battle of Sandle Castle (3 *Henry VI*, I, 3). There were of course other names of English noblemen in the play, but none was borne by a man so nearly connected with Essex and so openly devoted to him as was Roger Manners. Also no other name was so insistently repeated in the plays.

Q. Margaret. Or, for the rest, where is your darling *Rutland*? . . .
 What, hath thy fiery heart so parched thy entrails,
 That not a tear can fall for *Rutland's* death? . . .
York. Would'st have me weep? Why now thou hast thy will:
 These tears are my sweet *Rutland's* obsequies . . .

Ibid., I, 4.

In Act II, sc. 2 came the line:

'Twas you that killed young *Rutland*, was it not?

and in sc. 6:

Stifle the villain, whose untaunched thirst
 York and young *Rutland* could not satisfy.

It was bad enough that the name occurred both in *Richard III* and in *Richard II*. It would have been tempting fate indeed to add *Henry VI* to the plays in Meres' list.

Two questions may here be asked of orthodox critics.

1. If Shakspeare the actor was the author of the plays, why should he conceal his name from 1592 till 1598? 2. Having abstained from publicly asserting his right to them for six years, why should he proclaim it at the time precisely when there was every reason for concealing it more carefully than before, unless he felt particularly anxious to be locked up in the Fleet or to part with his ears at the executioner's hands?

Our learned critics will not believe in this secret. They believe in all the incongruities and inconsistencies of the legend or the tradition of Stratford, but not in what happens every day around them. It was impossible, they say, to have kept such a secret without the whole London society knowing it. Of course, a part of the society did know, but only a small part — the poet's own friends. But we must not forget, that, on good authority, the majority of our critics are *blind or naively perverse*. They are both childishly credulous and childishly obstinate. They do not see that we are surrounded with well guarded secrets in the most important affairs of life. All unpunished murders are well kept secrets. So are all undiscovered crimes and minor offenses all over the world. Sometimes the whole police force of a country is set to work to detect the doer of a particularly heinous deed and the whole country anxious to discover and punish the criminal — vainly. The Stratfordian writers do not know that. Any day in New York, London, Paris, Berlin great amounts of stocks and shares are thrown on the market; everybody knows that some terrible *coup de bourse* is soon

to follow; thousands of stockbrokers and other gamblers are athirst to discover the reason; but the secret remains locked between the seller and his broker so long as they care to keep it. Our Shakespeareans never heard of that.

It was much easier to cover Rutland's harmless hobby. There was nothing to suggest that the actor of the Curtain or the Globe was not the author of the plays he was producing and nobody, outside the playhouse and even in it, cared to know whether he was or not. Ben Jonson called William Shakspere a broker, but there is nothing to show that he was a dishonest broker. It would have been a brazen breach of faith on his part to divulge the secret and it would have certainly deprived him of his patron's credit and support. His fellow actors also probably knew, but were as careful as he for the same reason. If no secret of such kind can be kept from this world, let our Stratford shriners reveal to us who was Dmitri the Pretender who ruled over Muscovy eleven months as the last of Rurik's descendants? Who was the Iron Mask? Who the Chevalier d'Eon? Gaspar Hauser? Jack the Ripper? And who was *Junius*, whom all London strove to find out and never could? They never breathe a word about these mysteries, but we insist on an answer to each of these questions. If they fail to answer one, they have lost their great argument.

Chapter IX.

The Peer and the Actor

All's Well that Ends Well "is largely infused with terms borrowed from mechanics, engineering and military art".

— Henry J. Ruggles

"In the letters of Sir Tobie Matthew . . . the sobriquet of Sir John Falstaff seems to have been bestowed on Shakespeare."

— Sidney Lee

Essex and Rutland in Ireland — Life in London — William Shakspeare as Sir John Falstaff — "As You Like It" at Wilton House — "Julius Caesar" — "All's Well that Ends Well" — "Henry V" — Rutland's marriage.

I HE year 1599 brought with it a new expedition for Essex. He was entrusted by the Queen with the arduous task of suppressing Tyrone's rebellion in Ireland. His popularity in London imparted to the people good hopes of success. When he rode through the streets at the head of his army, "they pressed exceedingly to behold him, especially in the highways for more than four miles space, . . . and some followed him until the evening, only to behold him" The expedition sailed for Ireland early in April. We may imagine

— Not Rutland. He was with Essex from the very first day. He probably was at his side at the latter's triumphant ride through the City, described by Stowe. He seems to have joined the army without the Queen's authority and knowledge. A touch of harmless fatuity may be noted in his letter to Cecil, written from Dublin on May 8th: "I am very glad Her Majesty takes no notice of my being here, as I desire she may continue yet in that mind till I have made by some actual testimony appear unto her and the world the true causes of my undertaking both this course and all the rest of my courses." The passage to Ireland was not an easy one, and Rutland once more saw danger at sea. On landing a few miles from Dublin about one o'clock after midnight one of the boats miscarried upon a rock. Essex came to help the party in his own boat and "fell himself several times on another rock". The landing was however effected without losses. Rutland was made Colonel of one of the foot regiments. But his experiences of warfare were short. They proved better qualified to acquaint him with the difficulties

and drawbacks, the mismanagement and lack of energy than with the brilliant and generous side of a war. The rebels exceeded the English in numbers, in spirit, in strength of purpose and in swift action. They swore "if there were an Earl of Essex upon every English churl that was come over, they should be fought withal." On one occasion the English are described as "lying still like drones without doing service, the soldiers showing extreme cowardice and the officers neither courage nor judgment".

Elizabeth had not been long in ignoring Rutland's absence from London. As early as April 27th Lord Henry Howard wrote to Southampton. "The Queen begins to storm exceedingly at my Lord of Rutland's incorporation into Jason's fleet and means, she says, to make him an example of contemning princes' inhibitions to all that shall come after him." On May 13 the dowager Countess of Southampton wrote to her son: "My Lord of Rutland is sent for in great bitterness. The Tower and the Star Chamber have been spoken of, but the Fleet, it is feared, will be his lodging for the time being." The young Earl was knighted by Essex on May 30, but he could not stay away from London against the Queen's impatient orders. He sailed back to England. After what he had seen in Ireland, he could entertain no sanguine expectations of success for his friends, however ardently he may have wished it. His impression is echoed in *Henry V* (Prol. to Act V):

Were now the general of our gracious Empress,
As in good time he may, from Ireland coming,
Bringing rebellion broached on his sword,
How many would the peaceful city quit
To welcome him!

There is no ring of confidence in these lines.

We must now turn to the second period of the poet's dramatic work.

His progress, after *The Comedy of Errors* and *The True Tragedie*, was an exceptionally swift one. After a few *coups d'essai* he stepped into a rapid succession of *coups de maitre*. We have seen that between 1598 and 1600 he wrote three Histories — *Henry IV, Part I*, *Henry IV, Part II* and *Henry V*; one romantic drama — *The Merchant of Venice*, and five comedies — *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Twelfth Night*, *Much Ado about Nothing* and *As You Like It*. Two more plays are commonly allocated to the same time: *Julius Caesar* and *All's Well that Ends Well*. This brings Shakespeare's productions to not less than nine plays of unrivalled magnificence in three years, — a splendid but, for a genius, by no means an unusual creative activity. What is indeed extraordinary, is the character of his creative power, not the quantity of its productions, — the inexhaustible variety, the dazzling colours, and the exquisite poetic feeling combined with the gift of "seeing quite through the deeds of men". *Henry V* and *Bottom*, *Doll Tearsheet* and *Juliet*, *Fallstaff* and *Cobweb*, that these should be conjured to immortality by a few drops of ink from the same pen, — this can only be explained by murdering impossibility with one word — Shakespeare.

Can Roger Manners, the soldier, the keen sportsman and poor courtier, be suffered to approach that name without being crushed to pieces at the first touch of literary criticism? Not Rutland by himself, of course, any more than Shakspeare of Stratford or Bacon by themselves could be. It must be well realized and well kept in mind that, as we have said before, genius is always a given quantity in any investigation or dispute about the authorship of the First Folio.

The real question is not whether Rutland had the titanic abilities requisite for writing the plays, but whether the circumstances of his life and his personal occupations are reconcilable with the surmise that he was their author; — whether they make the suggestion improbable or plausible, doubtful or convincing.

What was the young man doing between 1597 and 1600? He was Constable of Nottingham Castle, Chief Justice of Sherwood Forest and Lord Lieutenant of Grantham. He was incorporated as a student at Gray's Inn. He took part, as we know, in three military expeditions, one of which, the cruise to the Azores, was full of adventure and not exempt of danger. We see him at Court in London, in Richmond, at Nonesuch, at Greenwich Palace, at Hampton Court. He plays tennis at Essex House and loses money at primero to the Countess of Southampton and to Lady Walsingham, his future mother-in-law; he is a frequent guest at Barnes Elms, where he meets men and women of Essex's faction and occasionally some of the Cecil party. The names are familiar to us: Essex, his wife, Lady Frances, and his step-daughter, Elizabeth Sidney; The Earl and Countess of Southampton, the young Earl of Northumberland, Lord Willoughby, Lady Penelope Rich, and others. Hunting, hawking, horse-racing, cards, private theatricals and masques, love-making and attendance at Court are the main occupations of this aristocratic coterie. On the 14th of February 1598 a grand entertainment is mentioned as given at Essex's house. The Ladies of Essex, Leicester, Northumberland, Bedford, and Rich, with the Lords of Essex, Mountjoy and others, Rutland among them, were kept up till one o'clock after midnight by the performance of two plays. The Earl spends his large income freely. He purchases costly armour, plate, jewelry, musical

instruments, rich habits and carriages; horses, dogs, and, of course, hawks. We find in the accounts of Belvoir Castle such entries as: "for *iiij mallardes* to treaue his Lordshippe's halkes (hawks) *ijs*; for *iiij tame ducks* to treaue his Lordshippe's halkes *ijs*; and for casting *xijd*," and the like. He does not neglect the paternal library and his choice of books is significant: for Sidney's *Arcadia*, *ixs*; for *Aristotle's Phisickes, Rhetoricke and Ethickes*, *xijs, iiijd*; for *Titus Livius* in English, *xxiijs*; for the *Observations upon Caesar's Commentaries*, *vjs—xxxvjs*. There also appears *A Book of Merry Tales*. "That I was disdainful, and that I had my wit out of the hundred merry tales", says Beatrice in *Much Ado about Nothing*.

The young Earl was, however, as we know, more assiduous at The Curtain and The Globe than at the Queen's court or at Gray's Inn. Going to the plays every day and sitting on the stage with other patrons of the playhouses, he was constantly in touch with the actors. Some of them must have served him to pass his scripts to the managers. We know three retainers of the Rutlands, connected with the theatres in London — Ben Jonson, Richard Burbage and William Shakspeare. It was apparently Shakspeare who was Rutland's agent. We have two curious allusions to him in contemporary correspondence.

In 1599, when the Earl of Southampton was in Ireland, his wife, the Countess Elizabeth, wrote to him the following interesting lines: "All the news I can send you, that I think will make you merry, is that I read in a letter from London that Sir John Falstaff is by his mistress Dame Pint-pot made father of a goodly miller's thumb — a boy that's all head and very little body; but this is a secret." Here is an unequivocal direct indication that Falstaff existed not only in

the poet's fancy, but also in poor humanity's flesh and blood. It is also an undeniable fact that William Shakspeare's bust in the church at Stratford on Avon, with the bald crown, double chin and portentous belly, is as true a likeness of Falstaff as it ever could have been of Shakspeare himself. Another very remarkable passage occurs in a contemporary letter of Sir Tobie Matthew: "As that excellent author, Sir John Falstaff, says, what for your business news, device, foolerie and libertie, I never dealt better since I was a man." The last line is from *Henry IV*, (II, 4), where Falstaff, bragging about his fight with "two men in buckram" who presently grow to eleven, brandishes his sword hacked like a saw with the words: "Ecce Signum. I never dealt better since I was a man." Orthodox writers do not hesitate to recognize the implication. "In the letters of Sir Toby Matthew", says Sir Sidney Lee, "the sobriquet of Sir John Falstaff seems to have been bestowed on Shakespeare (i.e. Shaxpere)." But the orthodox dogma applied to the sobriquet would bring us to strange conclusions. Falstaff, that roasted Manningtree ox with the pudding in his belly, that reverend Vice and grey Iniquity, was the creator of Jaques and Juliet, Ophelia, Cordelia and Hermione. He was Hamlet. It was he who wrote:

The honey-bags steal from the bumblebees,
And for night tapers crop their waxen thighs,
And light them at the fiery glow-worm's eyes,
To have my love to bed and to arise;
And pluck the wings from painted butterflies
To fan the moonbeams from his sleeping eyes.

That the Shakespeare who rimed these exquisite lines also created Falstaff and drew him after a real man, is what all writers have been doing since they began to write. But

that the poet of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and of *Hamlet* found not only his inspiration, but also his philosophy in the company of Dame Pintpot, Doll Tearsheet and Jane Nightwork is hard to believe. Is there a reader, we may ask, old man, young man, spinster or grandam, philosopher or bookkeeper, who has not been more than once shocked and puzzled by the obscene dialogues following the tenderest, purest speeches of Juliet, Ophelia, Desdemona or Perdita? In accordance with our fundamental principles, we must look for some explanation of this offensive inconsistency. In 1594, the Lord Mayor of London described the playhouses in the city as "the ordinary places of meeting for all vagrant persons that hang about it, thieves, horsestealers, cozeners, cony-catching persons, practicers of treason and such other like". It is not hard to imagine how such an audience had to be served. The coarsest puns, the most repellent, but, it must be confessed, the most witty obscenities were lavished into the actors' copies of the plays. In this way, two different men collaborated in the dialogue: the poet who, like Heine, weaved his gentle rhymes of the fragrance of violets and the rays of the moon, and the actor who knew his public and, with an eye to their groats and pence, had to pander to their expectations. No wonder Shakespeare himself expressed his distaste with such liberties in Hamlet's words: "let those who play your clowns speak no more than is set down for them."

The happy days of Rutland's career spent in service and in recreation at Court and in the fields, in peace and at war, are reflected in the second period of Shakespeare's work, briefly outlined in a preceding chapter. We may now cast a glance at the plays from a different angle. If Shakespeare was a man of the world, if he belonged to the *jeunesse dorée* of his time, he must occasionally have written not for the

crowd in the theatres of London, but for a more intimate audience. This surmise is supported by a close examination of the three great comedies, *Much Ado*, *Twelfth Night* and *As You Like It*, which abound in transparent allusions to the personalities and occurrences in contemporary high life in England. We have analyzed *Much Ado* under the directions of orthodox critics, and have discovered that the protagonists of the play, Claudio and Hero, Benedick and Beatrice, were taken from life; they portrayed Lord and Lady Southampton and the Earl of Rutland with his Countess.

We also have seen that *As You Like It* is interpreted by orthodox writers as an allusion to the banishment of Essex from the Court in 1598 and the courtship of his step-daughter Elizabeth Sidney by the Earl of Rutland. This does not mean that the play was written for the purpose of immortalizing these two occurrences. All we can reasonably surmise is that when working on the adaptation of Th. Lodge's pastoral *Rosalynde* for his comedy, the poet had before him two events of real life, in which for some reason he was particularly interested. This being so, the actual occurrences were interwoven with the fictitious story, and naturally gave to the play additional color, spirit and emotion. The comedy was certainly written for some private theatricals. We may imagine some such performance in an aristocratic house of Shakespeare's days. It is an exclusive social function. Great excitement prevails. Royalty will be present. The poet is among the guests. Will he be as entertaining as he usually is? Will there be the usual innocent scandal-mongering in the play? If it were *Much Ado*, we know very well whom we should be looking at and exchanging glances with. My Lord Southampton and Lady Elizabeth, Claudio and Hero, are

here, and so are Signior Benedick of Padua and Lady Beatrice, my Lord Rutland and his Countess.

But it is not *Much Ado* this time. It is a new play under the noncommittal title of *As You Like It*. And it shall be acted not by amateurs, but by professionals, the Lord Chamberlain's company of actors. This brings in another set of questions. Will some of us again be put into the play? Is William Shakspeare the actor coming with the players? What part will he take? And might there not be some hint at what is rumored about his being my Lord Rutland's double in some way?

And then the cat is out of the bag. Some impatient young lady could not keep the secret. Yes, there are delightful things. Lady Rutland is shown in the part of a girl as clever as was Beatrice in *Much Ado*, and her husband the Earl appears in three parts, as the hero and as two other amusing, queer characters who talk exactly as he does when he is in his satirical mood, and when he has "the blues". And there is a scene where he meets William Shakspeare, too.

Yes, the sceptic reader will say, all this is not impossible; but it is mere fiction and should not come into these pages, supposed to give us history, not pretty fancies. As it happens, it is not entirely fiction. *As You Like It* was actually performed at a private home under quite similar circumstances at a later period of time, when it was no longer a new play. In December 1603 the Dowager Countess of Pembroke wrote from Wilton House, near Salisbury, to her son, the third Earl, who was then in attendance on James I at Salisbury. She asked the Earl to bring the King to the Castle, where a new play was to be performed. The letter contained the casual remark: "We have the man Shakespeare with us." The actors traveled from Mortlake to Salisbury, and the comedy *As You Like It*

was performed at Wilton House on December 2. They received the next day upon the King's Council's warrant the sum of thirty pounds "by way of His Majesty's reward". So much for the time, the place, and the circumstances of the actual performance. But is it true that the author was presented in some of the characters of the play, and that there was a scene showing the poet and the actor on the boards?

In the fourth act, Touchstone, about whom all we know is that at some time he has been at Court, is talking to Audrey, a country wench. William, a clown, enters. After a few mocking remarks, Touchstone proceeds to question him. It is a strange colloquy:

Touch. Is thy name William?

Will. William, Sir.

Touch. A fair name. Was't born in the Forest here?

Will. I Sir, I thanke God.

Touch. Thanke God: A good answer: Art rich?

Will. 'Faith, sir, so-so.

Touch. So-so is good, very good, very excellent good: and yet it is not; it is but so-so . . . You do love this maid?

Will. I do, sir.

Touch. . . . Art thou learned?

Will. No, sir.

Touch. Then learn this of me: To have is to have: for it is a figure in rhetoric, that drink, being poured out of a cup into a glass, by filling the one doth empty the other. For all your writers do consent that *ipse* is he: now you are not *ipse*, for I am he.

Will. Whic' he, sir?

Touch. He, sir, that must marry this woman.

In a later scene Touchstone speaks of Audrey as "a poor virgin, sir, an ill-favoured thing, sir, but mine own; a poor humour of mine, sir, to take that that no man else will."

Of all pages in the First Folio, this one should attract

the attention and stimulate the ingenuity of readers, actors, and critics. The Baconians insist on the revealing sense of the dialogue. All Stratfordians are blind, deaf and dumb to it. Why should a gentleman who wants to marry a poor girl be called *ipse*, himself? What could Marlow, Green, Peele, Nash, and Ben Jonson — "all your writers" — have to do with the enigmatic pair? Was there any sense in their discussing and consenting to the marriage? We must either accept that as an utterly absurd babble of words or else we have to look for some plausible interpretation of the dialogue. Why should Touchstone speak so disdainfully of the girl, and yet set his mind on marrying her? The answer is that the "ill favored thing" is the poet's Art. It is precisely in such a negligent vein that a true poet will speak of his work and of his favorite creations. It is bad taste to praise our own achievements; there is grace in making light of them. Byron often discusses his "poesie" with undisguised tenderness, but never as something worthy of serious praise. Such weakness is the stamp of mediocrity.

To return to Wilton House. The Countess of Pembroke who was closely connected with the Rutlands, must have been well aware of the true relation between Roger Manners and Shakspeare. Her reference to the actor as "the man Shakspeare" makes the situation quite clear. Her eldest son, the Earl, must also have been in the secret. A few intimate friends among the guests probably knew it too. If Touchstone's cryptic speeches were not written for the amusement of these smilingly interested spectators, whom were they written for, and why? The play was long enough without these quite unnecessary scenes. But if the part of William was given to his namesake, the actor, then the situation was keenly amusing indeed. No one, of course, knew better than

he who was *ipse*, that is, the real poet. And we can imagine the delight of the audience at hearing the pouchy actor, with his truly Falstaffian humor, — "he was in his kingdom where he might be well laughed at" — utter the words, "Which he, Sir?" in accents of hopeless incomprehension. We can almost see his goodnatureedly impudent wink at his patrons as he leers at them across the footlights.

We will now examine very briefly the other plays commonly assigned to the years 1599-1600. They are *Julius Caesar*, *All's Well that Ends Well*, and *Henry V*,

Julius Caesar is a remarkable instance of an unbalanced composition in Shakespeare. The last two acts present an anti-climax which ruins the dramatic structure and the effectiveness of the plot. The drama should end with Caesar's death. Whatever arguments may be adduced to the contrary, it is manifest that after the first three acts the play loses its suspense and there is nothing in it even to approach the anxiety, terror and pity aroused in the audience by the scene in the Senate. This technical mistake in construction is, however, of no consequence from our standpoint. The fourth and fifth acts were probably written by some other playwright. But there is another strange feature in the tragedy which we cannot ignore. Shakespeare studied his source—Plutarch's *Lives* — as carefully as ever. It has been pointed out that the characters of Brutus, Portia and Cassius are reproduced exactly as they have been drawn by Plutarch. But Caesar, one of the greatest figures in history, is presented as nothing less than a miserable caricature. The penstrokes used to achieve this outrage on truth and history are splendid and merciless.

The real Caesar may have been vain. Shakespeare's

Caesar is ridiculously so. And the Romans, Shakespeare's Romans know it. Decius says:

... when I tell him he hates flatterers,
He says he does: being then most flattered.

There is one thing the historical Caesar never knew, and Shakespeare's Caesar expresses it admirably in the lines:

Of all the wonders that I yet have heard,
It seems to me most strange that men should fear...

This is the real Caesar. But at his first appearance in the play we hear a very different speech:

I fear him not.
Yet if my name were liable to fear,
I do not know the man I should avoid
So soon as that spare Cassius....
Such men as he be never at heart's ease
Whiles they behold a greater than themselves,
And therefore are they very dangerous.
I rather tell thee what is to be feared
Than that I fear; for always I am Caesar....

What a grotesque, contemptible confession of the very weakness he seeks to conceal! In his next appearance before us, his wife has had a bad dream and asks him not to leave the house for fear of danger. Again his attitude is pitiable. After the godlike:

Cowards die many times before their deaths,
The valiant never taste of death but once,

he goes on:

is obstinate and cruel. In the Senate, Metullus Cimber begs for pardon to his brother. Other conspirators join in the request. Caesar is more and more lofty:

If I could pray to move, prayers could move me;
But I am constant as the northern star . . .

Casca. O Caesar!

Caes. Hence. Wilt thou lift up Olympus?

*,

And the next moment — nothing but a rag of flesh.

So, in the place of the great Emperor, Shakespeare, mocking history, created an inflated, irresolute, timorous and cruel puppet, and sent it on the stage for the edification of the simple-minded good people of London town and the sarcastic gentlemen at the Court.

The fact is the more puzzling that, as has been pointed out more than once, we have ample proof that Shakespeare "knew very well what that man was and was worth". Shakespeare's Caesar is ridiculed not by unskilful imitation, but by the omission of certain traits of Plutarch's Caesar and the addition of others by the dramatist. This is a wilful alteration which can only be accounted for by a set purpose. The Dictator in the play was not a caricature of the Dictator in history, but a satire on Queen Elizabeth at her decline, and a perfectly true one. The testimony of contemporaries, her friends and her enemies, admirers and detractors, shows her vain, vacillating, vindictive and, above all, afraid of death. "To the initiated," says a modern writer, "there was a parallel between Caesar's senility and that of the tyrannical Elizabeth." Who but a man embittered against her could have indulged in the parody? There was nothing to induce Shakspeare to it. But the tragedy was written at the time when Elizabeth was most changing and most cruel

to Essex and to his friends. The bileous pass would come quite naturally from Rutland's pen.

All's Well that Ends Well presents a strange mixture of the poet's early and mature workmanship. The rhymed letters of Helena to the Countess and of Parolles to Diana are characteristically unlike the condensed expressiveness of some prosaic passages in the play. It may have been begun about the time of composition of *Much Ado about Nothing* and finished at some later period. It was not printed before 1623. The action is in Roussillion, Paris, Florence and Marseilles, with not a stroke of local color of Ile de France, Provence or Tuscany. The Countess of Roussillion, Shakespeare's addition to the original story, may be either the Dowager Countess of Southampton or the Countess of Rutland. But the hero of the play is the puzzling figure. Bertram is a villain. His desertion of Helena may be justified: the marriage was forced upon him. But his attitude towards Diana is that of a seducer, a deserter and a slanderer. An English critic, C. C. Creighton, found that Southampton's conduct is "curiously like that of Bertram in the play, and the most like it just in those particulars wherein Shakespeare departed from the story in Boccaccio's original to suit his private intention". But Bertram's cynical mendacity is quite unlike Southampton's nobly straightforward if undisciplined nature. It is not impossible that the poet himself felt guilty of some offence similar to Bertram's, and the play was his confession and penitence, in which he would be more inclined to scourge his sins than to mitigate them. An orthodox writer has noted that the diction of the play "is largely infused with terms borrowed from mechanics, engineering and military art". We know that Rutland took part in three military expeditions.

In *Henry V* a whole scene (III, 4) is written in French. It was as intelligible to the pit in the Curtain, The Theatre, the Rose and the Globe as Hebrew or Greek. In another scene (V, 2) we read:

K. Henry. Doe you like me, Kate?

Katherine. Pardonné[z] moy, I cannot tell
wat is like me.

King. An Angell is like you, Kate, and
you are like an Angell.

Kath. *Que dit il que je suis semblable
a les Anges?*

Lady. *Ouy, verayment (sauf vostre Grace)
ainsi dit il.*

King. I said so deare Katherine, and I must
not blush to affirme it.

Kath. *O bon Dieu, les langues des hommes sont
pleines de tromperies.*

This is charming, exquisite *badinage*, such as it was in Troy, in Rome, in England, under the Tudors or the four Georges; such as it ever shall be for ages and ages. But certainly not such as it was in Stratford or in Shoreditch.

Roger Manners was barely twenty when projects of his marriage with the youthful Elizabeth Sidney were discussed among their friends. The girl had been brought up at the house of his friend and patron, the Earl of Essex, who was her step-father. Essex and his wife, Lady Frances, probably viewed their union with favor. Yet, for some reason, there was for a time an estrangement between the two young people. In January 1598, Rowland Whyte wrote to Sir Robert Cecil: "My Lord Rutland, as I hear, is waxen more cold in the matter of marriage with your niece." Nothing seems available to explain this change of mind. Common experience tells us the reason in such cases is often another

woman. A Dark Lady may have cast her spell on the young Earl. A Juliet is as easily eclipsed by a Rosaline as a Rosaline by Juliet.

The future Countess of Rutland was a girl of rare accomplishments. She is described by Francis Beaumont as "more fine and pretty than spark of velvet, as witty as Pallas, and nothing inferior to her brilliant father in the virtue of poetry". Beatrice is certainly drawn from life and she was born under a dancing star. She tells us herself she had her good wit out of the *Hundred Merry Tales*. An entry in the Belvoir accounts shows the purchase of "a book of Merry Tales". The clever young lady may have used these very words in some swift repartee and her young lover was too keen not to pick it up for his own purpose. It may safely be surmised that some parts of the wonderful dialogue were taken from life.

The marriage was celebrated in 1599. Some time before, Southampton had married Elizabeth Vernon. Claudio and Hero, Benedick and Beatrice were happily united. Fate was smiling on them. But how far away are her smiles from an angry frown? It so happens that the next time we meet Beatrice, the Beatrice of real life, we behold the child born for luxury and happiness crushed down in misery and disgrace, a sorrowfully silent figure

Chapter X.

Hamlet

Almost everything that has been written about this drama is out of focus.

—G. L. Kittredge

It is sheer impossibility that Shakespeare could have the knowledge of this kind from any books of that time in England

— Yan Steffanson

Problems and puzzles in "Hamlet" — Contradictions in the interpretation of the tragedy — The Danish background of the play — Analysis of the tragedy under the assumption of William Shakspeare's authorship — The historical events featured in "The Mousetrap" — The radical anachronism. Hamlet in cap and gown

WE HAVE noted in our first chapter some curious remarks of our foremost Shakespeareans. They tell us in so many words, there is no mystery about Shakespeare, but Shakespeare is one of the most baffling enigmas of History. It happens that while they are so radically at variance on the matter generally, these writers are in perfect agreement on the question which we now have to examine. They agree that of all Shakespeare's plays *Hamlet* is the one which bears most vividly the stamp of his personality. Such is also our own impression when we read the play or look and

listen to it on the stage. This being so, we would expect to find many obscure points, if such there be, to be cleared and not a few facts to be explained by the tragedy. But our expectations are bitterly disappointed. We are informed on the best authority that *Hamlet*, the poet's greatest drama, is by many good rules a very bad play; and that while the problems of the text are considerable, the problems of the play are infinite. And the remarkable thing is that upon more intensive examination we find that these crushing observations are perfectly justified. In following *Hamlet* on the stage, all our attention is captivated by the suspense in action, the variety and the intensity of emotion in the dramatic incidents, and the transcendent brilliance of the dialogue; the defects escape our notice. But they are there none the less. They are partly sins against stagecraft, partly blunders in the treatment of the emotional elements of the plot. We are surprised by the mistakes of dramatic technique in a play written by a professional dramatist and a dramatist who is also an actor. The psychology, too, astonishes us as suggesting a break, a flaw in Shakespeare's normally so true and sound understanding of human nature. We shall examine these and some other puzzling circumstances to ascertain whether our heretic theory, which we now believe to be not heresy but truth, may not help to elucidate them.

The first question is: Why should Amleth, the crafty man of action of the original stories, be transformed into a morbid procrastinator absorbed in self-contemplation and self-denunciation, but utterly incapable of reasonably determined action? We further ask: whence comes the hopeless pessimism which pervades the drama from the first act to the last? How did Shakespeare acquire such accurate

knowledge of Danish customs and speech? Why should the Castle of Elsinore, actually standing on flat ground, be pictured on high cliffs above the sea? Why is the murder of King Hamlet committed in so unusual a place as a flower garden? How could the pictures of the murdered King and the murderer-King be hanging side by side in the Queen's apartments? How did Shakespeare learn the minute details of the murder of Duke Alfonso Gonzaga, of Mantua, and of Duke Francesco della Rovere of Urbino, reproduced in the by-play of the third act? How could a legendary Prince of Denmark graduate at a German University created hundreds of years after his death? Why should a legendary Danish Prince and a legendary Danish Chamberlain talk like fellows of an English University? How could such ridiculous historical, psychological and technical blunders come from under Shakespeare's pen?

There was a period in the poet's life which brought about a marked change in his happy disposition. Melancholy, sorrowfulness, distrust of mankind and weariness of life do not appear in the earlier dramas. Romeo dies, but he is neither a misanthrope nor a pessimist. Antony in *The Merchant of Venice*, having helped his friend, is armed and well prepared to die; there is neither bitterness nor hate in this. Petruccio and Benedick are boisterously full of *joie de vivre*. Valentine and Bassanio are gentle of heart and mind, but we can discern no touch of *taedium vitae* in them. Nor do we find it in Jaques who thinks it is good to be sad and say nothing. The first published play which carries the stamp of personal and impersonal sadness is *Hamlet*. This was followed by *Measure for Measure*, *Othello*, *Lear*, *Macbeth* and *Timon of Athens*. What is there to account for this sudden change in the poet's disposition?

Some of the orthodox writers have a very simple answer to this question. Sir Sidney Lee wrote: "A popular theory presumes that Shakespeare's decade of tragedy was the outcome of some spiritual episode of tragic gloom in the private life. No tangible evidence supports or does *counterbalance the nebulous theory." The foremost literary critic outside England, Dr. George Brandes, boldly sided with the official biographer. "It cost Shakespeare no effort," he tells us, "to transform himself into Hamlet. It is true that Hamlet's outward fortunes were different from his. He had not lost his father by assassination, his mother had not degraded herself. But all these details were only outward symbols. He had lived through all Hamlet's experiences — all." A cool and comfortable way of disposing of a serious question by a metaphysical assertion which is wholly contrary to truth. What Sir Sidney Lee called a popular but nebulous theory is, in fact, the opinion of the overwhelming majority of foremost critics in England and out of England, this side of salt water and across the Ocean. It is based upon the history of literature of all peoples and all times and is the outward manifestation of a natural law of the human mind. It is also what we all feel when we read *Hamlet*. J. P. Collins, referring to the period immediately following the publication of *Much Ado about Nothing* concluded: "The time is now approaching when mirth and even joy of life are extinguished in his soul. Heavy clouds have massed themselves on his mental horizon, — their nature we can only divine — gnawing sorrows and disappointments beset him. We see the melancholy growing and extending, we observe its changing expression without knowing its cause. From this point for a certain period all his impressions of life and humanity become more and more

painful." Prof. A. C. Bradley writes: "Shakespeare during these years was probably not a happy man, and it is quite likely that he felt at times even an intense melancholy, bitterness, contempt, anger, possibly even loathing and despair." A sceptical critic, Robert Palk, writes: "In 1603 the plays of Shakespeare begin to show the influence of some great catastrophe . . . He was a prisoner condemned and disgraced for some capital offense." Other orthodox critics hold similar views. We shall accept this psychologically sound standpoint.

Let us now examine the tragedy from another standpoint. A play of *Hamlet* is mentioned in Henslowe's Diary as having been performed at the Newington Theatre some time between 1594 and 1598. Nothing is known about that play, and we can only surmise that our poet took his subject from it. The title-page of the first Quarto, published in 1603, described the play as "The Tragicall Historie of Hamlet Prince of Denmarke By William Shake-speare. As it hath beene diverse times acted by his Highnesse seruants in the Cittie of London; as also in the two Vniuersities of Cambridge and Oxford, and else-where." This first edition contained 2143 lines of verse and prose; the second Quarto, published the next year, had nearly four thousand; both are remarkable by their vivid local coloring. This characteristic feature of the dialogue is not discussed nor even mentioned in current orthodox books because there is no evidence that Shakspeare ever visited Denmark. But a Danish writer, Yan Steffanson, has studied the matter in detail and gives us the simple explanation. Let us open *Hamlet* (I, 2):

And what make you from Wittenberg, Horatio?

Mr. Steffanson tells us that Wittenberg was the favorite

University of the Danish noblemen who studied abroad. We read further (II, 1):

Polonius. Enquire me first what Danskers are in Paris . . .

"Danskers," says Mr. Steffanson, is a Danish word and means Danes. The word occurs nowhere else in the whole range of English literature. Where did William Shakspeare learn it? In the scene between Hamlet and Queen Gertrude after the performance of the by-play we find (III, 4):

Look here upon this picture and on this,
The counterfeit presentment of two brothers . . .

This scene has always puzzled the actors, and has been interpreted by them in many different ways, but never quite naturally. It was quite in order that a portrait of Claudius, the reigning King, should be seen in the Queen's room; but not the picture of her murdered husband, denouncing his murderer. Where, then, could be the second picture? Mr. Steffanson has found the answer in an English Chronicle, Stowe's Annals (1605). He quotes the following passage: "This Castell of Elsinor is a quadrant, and one of the goodliest fortifications in that part of the world, both for strength and most curious architecture, and was built by Frederick, this King Claudius's father. There is in the same many princely lodgings, and especially one great chamber; it is hanged with tapestry of fresh colored silks, without gold, wherein all the Danish Kings are expressed in antique habits, according to their several times, with their arms and inscriptions, containing all their conquests and victories." The two Kings, Hamlet and Claudius, were there along with their ancestors in due succession. The tapestry is of course the

arras through which Polonius is slain. "How much impressiveness", says Mr. Steffanson, "solemn dignity, nature and graceful action is thus restored to the scene." Hamlet raises his hand and points at the two figures, as he addresses his cruel words to the Queen. But how came the poet by that knowledge.

We return to the first act (sc. 2):

King. No jocund health that Denmark drinks to-day
But the great cannon to the clouds shall tell,
And the King's rouse the heaven shall bruit again.
Respeaking earthly thunder.

In the next scene a flourish of trumpets and ordinance is heard behind the wings. Horatio asks:

What does this mean, my Lord?

Hamlet. The King doth wake to night and takes his rouse,
Keeps wassail, and the swaggering up-spring reels,
And as he drains his draughts of Rhenish down,
The kettle-drum and trumpet thus bray out
The Triumph of his pledge.

Horatio. Is it a custom?

Ham. Ay, marry, is't.

But to my mind, though I am native here,
And to the manner born, it is a custom
More honored in the breach than the observance.
This heavy-loaded revel east and west
Makes us traduced and taxed by other nations.

"In the XVIth and XVIIth centuries", says Mr. Steffanson, "the Danes were the hardest drinkers in Europe." Their manner of drinking healths appears to have been strongly disapproved not by themselves, but by Englishmen. In 1603 an embassy was sent to Denmark by James I to present to King Christian IV the Order of the Garter on the oc-

casion of the christening of his son. William Segar, then Garter King at Arms, was in the Ambassador's suite. On the evening of the baptism, July 10, Segar was present at a banquet, which he describes in the following terms: "It would make a man sick to heare their drunken healths. Use hath brought it into fashion, and fashion made it a habit, which it ill beseems our nation to imitate." — "A custom more honored in the breach than the observance" and which made the Danes of that day "traded and talked of by other nations." On July 14 the ambassador gave on board his ship a banquet to the King. "Every health reported six or eight or ten shots of great ordinance, so that during the King's abode the ship discharged 150 shots." Segar wrote in his notes that on the 16th of July the ambassador at last "grew weary of these Bacchinall entertainments" and took his leave. On the 19th he sailed, saluting Kroneborg and resaluted by the King who, standing on the battlement, rising out of the sea, "let fire to a cannon with his own hand as their farewell"

The coincidences are obvious. But the perplexing circumstance is that Segar's notes first appeared in print in the second edition of Stowe's *Annals*, in 1605; that is, two years after the first Quarto of *Hamlet* and a year after the second. Mr. Steffanson justly remarks that Stowe's *Annals* could not be Shakespeare's authority for his description of the royal Danish portraits. Nor, we may add, for his report of Danish customs and speech. The learned critic suggests that William Shakspeare was among the actors of the Earl of Leicester's company who went on a tour to Denmark in 1586. This would certainly account for the accuracy of local color in *Hamlet*, but there is not the slightest indication that Shakspeare belonged to Leicester's men. And we still have to ex-

plain the insertion of Segar's personal notes in the text of the tragedy.

The explanation is simple: the ambassador was Rutland and Segar was his secretary.

It has been pointed out by some critics that the Castle of Elsinore is scarcely raised above the level of the Sound, and yet Horatio cautions Hamlet against the ghost's invitation to the platform:

"What if it tempt you toward the flood, my lord,
Or to the dreadful summit of the cliff
That beetles o'er his base into the sea,
And there assume some other horrible form,
Which might deprive your sovereignty of reason
And draw you into madness? Think of it!
The very place puts toys of desperation,
Without more motive, into every brain
That looks *so many fathoms to the sea*
And hears it roar beneath."

There was indeed nothing to answer this description at Elsinore. But it is stated in Stowe's Chronicle that on their homeward journey Rutland's ships met with heavy storms, and, instead of landing at Gravesend they were driven as high as Scarborough, where the cliffs are 300 feet above sea-level. There Rutland heard the roaring of the angry monster and looked death in the eyes under the *dreadful summit* of the cliff. The rocks, *looking many fathoms to the sea* and the stormy waves made too good a background for the ghost's appearances not to introduce them into the play.

We should not, however, forget our determination to give all due attention to the legend of Stratford. We will, accordingly, assume that *Hamlet* was written not by Roger Manners, the peer, but by Mr. William Shakspeare, the gen-

tleman. Let us imagine the actor-playwright at work. He has before him the *Historia Danica* of Saxo Grammaticus, and the *Histories Tragiques* of François de Belleforest, where he reads the story of Amleth, Prince of Denmark. King Horwendil is slain at a banquet by his brother Feng, who marries his queen. Planning revenge, Amleth feigns madness, but his ambiguous speeches arouse Feng's suspicions and a man in the King's service is instructed to spy on him. In an interview with the Queen, Amleth, hopping about the stage like a cock, discovers the eavesdropper hidden in a heap of straw and kills him. Feng sends him to England with two companions who carry orders for his death, but this plot miscarries. Eventually Amleth nets the king and his courtiers in hangings knitted by the Queen, sets fire to the palace and kills his stepfather. Such was the original story. Shakspeare, the playwright, creates an entirely new play of this crude stuff. He lavishes into it anything that may occur to his divinely versatile fancy. He is an actor and imagines himself exchanging theatrical recollections with his legendary Prince.

Hamlet. My Lord, you plaid once i'th' University, you say?

Polonius. That I did, my Lord, and was accounted a good actor.

Hamlet. What did you enact?

Polonius. I did enact Julius Caesar, I was kill'd
in'th' Capitol Brutus kill'd me

Recollections of the stage were quite natural under an actor's pen. But why should the actor from Stratford think of University theatricals?

His company's competition with a company of children actors is reflected in the passage (II, 2): "... there is an ayrie of Children, little Eyases that crye out on the top of question; and are most tyrannically clap't for't: these are now

the fashion." He is a refined actor and speaks with contempt of the coarse practices of pery-wig-pated Fellows who "teare a Passion to tatters" to split the ears of the Groundlings. He adds priceless directions on the art, which are quoted today in every book on playing. He is also a philosopher and he has not forgotten some unpleasant incidents of his youth, when he was "much given to unluckiness in stealing venison and rabbits", particularly from the preserves of Sir Thomas Lucy "who had him whipt and sometimes imprisoned". So he writes: "Use every man after his desert, and who should 'scape whipping?"

Yes, Shakspeare of Stratford could have written some of the lines in *Hamlet* — if he could write at all. But with all that, there are perplexing aspects of his supposed authorship.

Being an actor, he had an excellent knowledge of the stage. He wants his house full and he knows his audience. They want excitement and laughter; blood and rich salt. So he serves his Londoners who, a few years back, lived through the danger of years of war, Spanish invasion, a terrible plague, and an open rebellion in the city, with much exalted and subtle philosophy and an interminable description of the legendary siege of Troy three thousand years ago. He knows that a show in his playhouse never lasts longer than three hours. So he adds to the long story an elaborate discourse on the art of refined acting; a monologue on suicide; another monologue on the inefficiency of prayer without penitence and restitution; a third one on the correlation of volition and action; and a dialogue between two grave-diggers mocking the suicide of an insane English judge. In this way the drama becomes impossible to perform in the usual length of time.

In the original story by Belleforest, King Horwendill is killed in the presence of all his Court. In our tragedy, the very nerve of the story is the secrecy of the crime. It is known to the murderer alone. Even after the ghost's appearances and admonitions to Hamlet, the audience is kept in suspense by Hamlet's own uncertainty and hesitations, and it is only in the third act that the truth is finally revealed. The actor-playwright's ingenuity devises a very effective way of bringing about this turning point of the drama. The murder shall be enacted before the murderer and will force him to betray himself. Here, William Shakspeare's inspiration is not only brilliant, but supernatural. His second sight carries him over seas and mountains to a little town in the duchy of Milan and reveals to him all the details of a real murder committed there under dramatic circumstances, which shall serve him well. The play in the play begins with a dumb-show: "*Enter a King and a Queen, very lovingly; the Queen embracing him, and he her. She kneels and makes protestations unto him. He takes her up and declines his head upon her neck; lays him down upon a bank of flowers; she, seeing him asleep, leaves him. Anon comes in a fellow, takes off his crown, kisses it, and pours poison in the King's ears, and exit. The Queen returns; finds the King dead and makes passionate action. The Poisoner with some two or three Mutes, comes in again, seeming to lament with her. The dead body is carried away. The Poisoner woos the Queen with gifts; she seems loath and unwilling awhile, but in the end accepts his love.*"

How would we imagine the poisoning of a King on the stage? At a festival, as Britannicus is poisoned by Nero in Racine; with a poisoned nosegay, as Adrienne Lecouvreur is poisoned by the Duchess of Bourbon in Scribe; or on a bed

of sickness in the dead of night. Not in broad daylight; not on a bed of flowers. Why should the actor-playwright have imagined the unusual setting for the foul deed? The dumb show is followed by the play. After the love scene between the King and Queen, the real King, Claudius, asks:

"What do you call the play?"

Hamlet explains:

"The Mouse-trap. Marry, how? Tropically.
This play is the image of a murder done in
Vienna. *Gonzaga* is the Duke's name;
his wife, *Baptista* . . ."

and, when the Poisoner appears on the stage,

"This is one *Lucianus*, nephew to the King."

The King in the show is asleep. *Lucianus* "powres poyson in his eares". Hamlet comments:

"He poysons him i'th Garden for's estate: his name's
Gonzaga; the Story is extant and writ in choyce Italian . . ."

There is an unmistakable ring of reality in these words. And in fact, on May 7, 1592, the Marchese Alfonso Gonzaga of Castelfredo, a relative to the Duke Vincenzo Gonzaga, Duke of Mantua, was slain on his estate in the country by eight *bravi* in the pay of his nephew, the Marchese Rodolfo di Castiglione. The murder was committed about midday, while Alfonso Gonzaga was resting in the villa. He left a widow, Ippolita, and a daughter, Caterina. The murderer appeared at Castelfredo and kept the women prisoners for some time. But he was himself murdered the next year. The story is told by Antonio Possevino, chronicler of the

Gonzagas. As we are dealing with circumstantial evidence, we note that the time, the place, the motive, and the connections between the actors of the real drama are reproduced on the stage. Alfonso Gonzaga was killed at his villa — "i'th Garden"; in the month of May "*ypon a Banke of Flowers*"; — about noontime — "My custom always in the afternoon", says the Ghost in the first act; — by his nephew — "one Lucianus, nephew to the King" — to appropriate the estate — "for's estate".

As pointed out by an orthodox writer, it is hard to admit, in the natural course of things, that the details of an occurrence of purely local interest in a provincial spot in Lombardy and even the occurrence itself should have become known to William Shakspeare at Bishopsgate at a time when neither telegraphs nor railroads were in existence. But we know that Roger Manners sojourned in the very locality of the dastardly crime less than five years after the event, when the murder, still fresh in the memories of man, must have often been discussed in the palaces and villas around Milan and Mantua.

But, it might be objected, the murder in *The Mousetrap* is quite different from that of Alfonso Gonzaga — he was not killed by poison poured into his ears. Most certainly not. And this strengthens our conclusions still more. Which, we ask, was better suited for stage purposes and for the whole structure of the tragedy, an open murder by hired assassins as it happened in Mantua, or a secret murder? The reader will answer the question, and we then shall again look into the old Italian chronicles. In 1538 Francesco Maria della Rovere, Duque of Urbino, married to Eleonora Gonzaga, died in Venice after a heavy illness. The autopsy found that he was poisoned, and rumour held that the poison had

been given him by his barber at the instigation of Luigi Gonzaga Rodomonté. The story is told by C. B. Beluzzi in his private diary, but was not published before 1605 in the Duque's biography of G. B. Leoni. Rutland knew the two stories and combined them in his by-play. The "*powres poyson in his eares*" was his own modification of the facts.

Still another strange circumstance claims our attention. There is in the tragedy a heavy technical fault which under the accepted tradition is artistically and psychologically inexplicable. Shakespeare made Hamlet a student of Wittenberg University. This idea is not only historically, but also esthetically a blunder because we cannot detect in the five acts of the tragedy a single line which is in any way improved by the absurd fabrication. Hamlet's absence from the Court could have been motivated by some temporary occupation in the country, or a diplomatic mission abroad, or a military expedition, or simply a pleasure trip away from Elsinore. His refined culture and thinking could have been explained historically: neither Plato nor Cicero nor Seneca went to an English or German university. Hamlet could very well have been what he is shown to be in the dialogue — a well educated, delicately sensitive man, with a philosophic disposition and frame of mind, without the slightest prejudice to the psychology of the play. The University of Wittenberg was founded in 1502; — in the *Hystorie of Hamlet* the events are placed "a long time before the Kingdome of Denmark received the faith of Jesus Christ, and embraced the doctrine of the Christians". Why then should the legendary Prince of Denmark be made a student, or a bachelor of arts, or a master of arts of a University founded more than fifteen hundred years after his death? And why should Polonius, the legendary councilor of a legendary

king of Denmark talk of performing Julius Caesar when he was, which he never could have been, an undergraduate at the same University? Familiar pictures and forms of speech not only help us to express our thoughts; they help us to think. They may occasionally trap us into an error or an ambiguous statement and, as we have seen, they may sometimes betray our identity. But it is only in the habitual pathways of the mind that such slips really do originate. That a vision of a *German* University of the year 1502 of our Lord should appear to a *London* actor writing in the seventeenth century a play on legendary *Denmark*, as it was "long before" the birth of Christ, was and remains simply beyond the borders of reasonable possibilities.

But there is more than that. The real question here is not only how and why should Hamlet be a fellow of Wittenberg University; but, how is it that in two hundred years not a single Shakespeare scholar, professional critic, historian, dramatist, actor, lawyer, or alert newspaper scribbler ever caught sight of the gross absurdity? The slightest anachronisms in the plays, such as fans, clocks and handkerchiefs in ancient Rome; or London public houses and a convent in ancient Ephesus, or the daughter of a Russian Emperor contemporary with the oracle of Delphos, and the like, are commented upon in all modern editions of the plays. The most harmless errors of time or place, the tiniest penslips or misprints are analysed compared and explained with marvelous industry and ingenuity. But the blunder in *Hamlet*, the heaviest of all because it appears not in a single line or in one word, but is carried on through the five acts of the tragedy, is unnoticeable to our best Shakespeareans. There is not a word on it in the nine hundred closely printed pages of the Furness *Variorum* of *Hamlet*, nor in the profuse

dissertations of later critics. How could that be? Would the reader care to pause for a moment and ask the question of himself? He knows the answer. . . . As to ourselves, blunt lovers of the poet, we take no heed of the flagrant incongruity for the same reason that we do not see the air: it is translucent. Hamlet's personality in the text and on the stage is so thoroughly imbued with the spirit of our happy college days, that we live it again with the comfort and delight of a fish returned into its salt or fresh water. Shakespeare's Hamlet was conceived and written by a man who had breathed college air at the mother University on the Cam and at the Nursery of Arts in Padua.

CHAPTER XI

In the Tower

"He had seen the head of Essex fall from the block with the black velvet of the scaffold for his pall of tragedy. He had stood in the shadow of death beside his dearest friend Southampton with the headsman's axe in sight."

— *Gerald Massey*

Essex's rebellion — His trial — Rutland's part in it — Rutland in the Tower — The executions — Echoes in the plays.

WE HAVE now to examine the cardinal problem of all Shakespeare lore from the psychological standpoint, — the origin of the dark plays, a problem which has clogged the ingenuity of all our loyal Stratfordians, petrified most of them and terrorised the rest into self-confessed panic and flight. By reading and comparing the thirty six plays, we can see that the poet must have lived through some distressful experience sometime between the happy comedies of 1600 and the publication of *Hamlet*, followed by *Macbeth*, *Othello* and *Lear* and the four plays commonly called the problem plays: *All's Well that Ends Well*, *Measure for Measure*, *Troilus and Cressida* and *Timon of Athens*. The transition from merriest sport to gloom and despair is so sudden and the unbalanced, discordant strain of mind so

obvious, as to be marked in every schoolbook. In this respect Shakespeare again stands alone in the literature of the world. As nothing happens without cause, a question to be asked is, What was the cause? And the authority to answer it should be that of our masters.

Referring to the problem dramas, Sir Edmund Chambers writes: "They are all unpleasant plays, the utterance of a puzzled and disturbed spirit, full of questionings, sceptical of its own ideals, looking with new misgiving into the ambiguous shadows of a world over which a cloud has passed and made a goblin of the sun." Being well aware that Phoebus Apollo never was turned into a goblin, we read in simple English: a crushing misfortune must have fallen on the poet, nothing short of a moral catastrophe. And not being aware of any calamity in William Shakspeare's life, we expect the master to enlighten us on the matter. We are surprised and disappointed. Sir Edmund Chambers has written more than a thousand pages on Shakespeare problems, and has nothing to say on the gravest problem of all. "It is perhaps hardly worth while," he goes on to say, "to speculate what causes, within or without, have precipitated a mood so alien to that in which, quite recently, such light-hearted comedies as *As You Like It*, *Much Ado about Nothing*, and *Twelfth Night*, have been written." A strange Perhaps. Far from accepting this strange suggestion, every active mind would be attracted by a fact unparalleled in history. What is obvious or easily explained does not stimulate our curiosity. The unknown, unexplained and seemingly inexplicable lures and spurs it to active inquisitiveness. A child of eight who often hears discussions on Shakespeare around him, asks: "Uncle, did the *not-real* Shakespeare pretend that he was?" Another day, he asked: "Uncle, why did Rutland not



ROBERT DEVEUREUX

SECOND EARL OF ESSEX

After the picture in the National Portrait Gallery, London.

RUTLAND'S LETTER FROM THE TOWER
to his uncle, Roger Manners,
May 16, 1601



1291. Nov. 21

your affectionate son & nephew
 J. M. M. M.

Good Uncle. the greatness of my misfor-
 tunes have made me more silent than
 I would have been because I shall be
 forced to add any grief to my friend
 in the remembrance of me. I shall
 not I assure you have more to
 say than any worldly thing that I shall
 be to give cause of discomfort to my
 best friends and myself in staying at my
 house. But all this with the cheerfulness of
 my own heart based in more a strong
 hope of good and since it hath pleased
 god and your Majesty to be so far from
 me as I don't not but live to be in
 comfort save my poor house although
 my estate is less to be much nearer
 then it was. wh. I thank god I grow
 by it seems not to have pleased the
 god to call me swift before them and
 at first they say before me the year
 was of my heart and the misfortunes of
 her my mercy to the one I gave
 humble thanks and for the other I placed
 repentance and penitence. The last
 was with them they gave me my share
 wh. was 30 thousand pound to each I
 humbly submit my lot to what I shall
 have here: he of what it shall please
 to have me. As yet I have no mitigation
 but my friends disagree not in the
 of it. And my confidence in the
 is great for I have been much bound
 especially to my secretaries who both in
 the world and in highly bound to
 you I am sure I may have hope of further
 blessing and then if you do come often
 with a great number to me to
 I much desire to wish you

want people to know he was Shakespeare?" These questions came from the blue, nothing at the moment suggesting Shakespeare to the child. Unquestionably, he had ruminated on them by himself. How is it that our grey-locked scholars do not perceive them? Sir Walter Raleigh of Oxford University writes of the Dark Period: "There are so many foot-prints around the cave of this mystery, none of them pointing in the outward direction, that I for one shall not attempt to tackle it." We open the book of our dashing, alert and aggressive American, L. P. Smith, — and are disappointed again. He even echoes his Oxford colleague's very words. The simple query, What happened to the poet? is to him a "Theban monster" and, like Sir Walter Raleigh, he recoils and "turns tail" on it. Why such groundless pusillanimity, such inane retreat? Medusas, Sphinxes and Minotaurs are things of the past; curiosity, inquisitiveness — the very nerve of scholarly research. We shall face the enigma and look for an answer to it. We shall not search long.

Essex's disastrous failures in Ireland, his unwarranted, reckless desertion of the English forces and sudden return to London had exhausted the Queen's patience. His subsequent actions only served to help his enemies in pushing him to the scaffold. He was a generous patron, but a poor courtier; a brave soldier, but an unsuccessful general; a child in political skill and craftiness as compared to the great Lord Burghley or his son. The Queen was tired of the failures of her ships and her armies under him. Still more so, perhaps, of his claims to her personal favour. An ill disguised animosity had gradually superseded her former attachment to him. Had he realized this and submitted to it, he might have been suffered to live. But he was blind to the change in his fortunes and still hoped to regain his former

influence over the Queen. Some of those who had attached their fortunes to his urged him on to an attempt to recover his position by force. His wiser friends, of whom Southampton was the foremost, sought to dissuade him from the hopeless and perilous enterprise. Cecil and his followers watched him closely and knew as much of his plans as any one of his friends. He himself gave his enemies the opportunity they were looking for, though his plot probably never matured to any definite line of action. The conspirators assembled at Drury House, Southampton's residence. The latter contended at the trial that though several projects had been suggested, nothing had been really decided upon. Essex's main object was to remove his personal enemies, Cecil, Cobham, and Raleigh, from the Queen's Council. The ministers saw it was time for them to strike. On February 6th, 1601, Essex was summoned to appear before the Council. He refused to comply with the order under pretext of illness, but he and his friends realized the peril. The next morning some eighty Knights and Gentlemen gathered at Essex House. He led them, his sword drawn, to St. Paul's Cross in the City, where he expected a rebellion of the people. Southampton, Rutland and the latter's two brothers, Francis and Oliver, were among those who went with him. About two hundred more of his partisans joined the rebels on the way. But nobody stirred in the streets. Orders had been issued by the Lord Mayor, and the citizens remained quiet within their houses. By the afternoon the Queen's envoys entered the City and proclaimed Essex traitor. Most of his followers fell off. He returned by the Thames to Essex House with some fifty men. The Queen's troops, led by Sir Robert Sidney, surrounded them. Essex and Southampton appeared on the leads, and after a short parley gave themselves up. The chief con-

'spirators were taken to Lambeth palace. On the next day they were conveyed to the Tower.

Rutland's part in the conspiracy seems to have been an insignificant one. He dined at his house in London on the eve of the outbreak with three or four friends, none of whom are mentioned among the rebels. Sir Henry Neville stated at the proceedings that the conspirators named some noblemen whom they would take with them, Rutland among others, but said they could not trust him with the matter above two hours before they attempted it. His brothers knew as little as he. Yet he is reported to have stated that Essex intended to possess himself of the City the better to revenge himself on his enemies, the Lord Cobham, Sir Robert Cecil and Sir Walter Raleigh. Rutland also declared that he was resolved to live or die with Essex and that the latter "did intend to make his forces so strong that Her Majesty should not be able to resist him in the revenge of his enemies". In the "Arraignment and Tryall" of Essex and Southampton, published later, his examination is given as follows: "He saith that being in London with the Earl of Essex, he heard him crie out in the street: 'England is bought and sold to the Spaniard,' and confesseth, when they had been possessed of London, their purpose was to have taken the Lord Keeper with them to the Court, with the Earl of Essex his company; and that the Earl of Southampton and Sir John Davies were in special confederacy and trust with the Earl of Essex in these cases. Lastly, that the Earl of Essex said he was sure of Sheriff Smith; and the Deponent specially noted, the Earl of Southampton was much discontented."

Strange as these damning disclosures may appear on Rutland's part, they are accounted for by the following letter of the presiding judge, Lord Buckhurst, to Sir Robert

Cecil on February 9th: "My son, Robert Sackville, being by me appointed, to attend the Earl of Rutland, and by wise conferences and handling the matter well with him, he hath discovered from him matter of importance fit for Her Majesty to know. For which purpose I have thought good to send him to you presently."

The evidence given by Roger Manners against Southampton was keenly felt by the latter. "As for my Lord of Rutland," he said, "whereas he inferreth against me to be a persuader and inviter of my Lord of Essex in these actions, he wronged me exceedingly, for he was never the man that saw me once discontented and therefore had small ground or reason to say so." Southampton certainly had good reasons for discontent against the Queen, and this was probably admitted by Rutland; it was then colored by the prosecutors into political and treasonable collusion with Essex. The Earl protested strongly against the depositions of some of the prisoners. "My Lord," he said, "they are men within the law and such as speak with a desire to live." These were true words, but they were answered by the man whose patron and benefactor he had been in his prosperity with a coldly ironical retort. "All you have to say," Bacon remarked, "or can say, is but a shadow."

Bacon's eagerness to obtain a part in the prosecution and his ferocious rhetoric are among the most revolting features of the proceedings. He seems to have been morbidly anxious to assert his loyalty to the Queen. In addressing the Peers he represented Essex's assurances that he was driven to action by his enemies' designs against him as Cain's excuses for the first murder and compared him to Pisis-tratus, who wounded himself and ran through the Streets of Athens, crying that an attempt had been made upon his

life. Essex rejoined that he could produce letters composed by Bacon himself to refute this accusation. Bacon answered by a still more perfidious and malignant retort. "It was not the company you carried with you, but the assistance you hoped for in the City which you trusted unto. The Duke of Guise thrust himself into the streets of Paris on the day of the Barricadoes in his doublet and hose attended only with eight gentlemen and found that help in the City, which (thanks be to God!) you failed of here. And what followed? The King was forced to put himself into a pilgrim's weeds, and in that disguise to steal away to scape their fury." The conviction was an easy task for the prosecution. Essex, Southampton, Henry Cuffe, Sir Gillie Merrick, Sir Charles Danvers, and Sir Christopher Blount were sentenced to death. A contemporary describes the proceeding as a sad picture. "During all this time the peers were engaged in stuffing themselves with beer and preserves which they caused to be placed before them in open Court as if they had not seen food for days. Puffing tobacco the while to the scandal of all present, until, well soused and drunk on tobacco fumes, they gave their votes condemning the two Earls as rebels and traitors to have heart and entrails torn out by the public executioner and burnt before them living; their heads struck off and their bodies quartered." Some of Essex's friends hoped that Elizabeth would not suffer him to die. But treason to the Prince was not his only crime. In words and in action he had offended her as a woman. She sent him to the block.

Fortunately for Shakespeare the poet, the authorship of *Richard II* was not investigated. Shakspeare the actor was not in any way involved in the rebellion and the composition of the play was a venial offence when compared to its production with an avowedly criminal intention. Had it

transpired that the author was among the conspirators, his doom would have been sealed.

The relatives and the friends of the prisoners used their best endeavours to help them. Nothing seems to have been done otherwise than through the all-powerful secretary of the Queen. We have letters written to him by the Countesses of Essex and of Southampton, the Dowager Countess of Southampton, Lady Ann Neville, and Lady Sandys. The notes exchanged between Southampton and his wife are worthy of record. His hasty lines, sent on the day of his imprisonment in the Tower, are addressed "To my Bess":

"Sweetheart, I doubt not but you shall hear, ere my letter come to you, of the misfortune of your friends. Be not too apprehensive of it, for God's will must be done, and what is allotted to us by destiny cannot be avoided. Believe that in this time there is nothing can so much comfort me as to think you are well and take patiently what hath happened, and contrarywise, I shall live in torment if I find you vexed for my cause. Doubt not but that I shall do well and please yourself with the assurance that I shall ever remain your affectionate Husband."

His wife's letters to Sir Robert Cecil are as simple and as pathetic as his own to her. The time had been when at her hour of plight he remained true to her in spite of all that was done by the jealousy of power and the venom of calumny to estrange them. The reader's heart is warmed to see the beautiful girl now as loyal to her husband as he had been to her in her unhappy days. She always began her letters with the same gentle words: "My dear Lord and only joy of my life." In one of her letters she spoke in sorrowful accents of her longing to "show some effect of her true and

faithful love" to him. In another letter, addressed, as the former, to Cecil, she wrote:

"The woeful news to me of my Lord's condemnation passed this day makes me in this most amazed distress address myself unto you and your virtues as being the only likely means to yield me comfort. Therefore I do beseech you and conjure you by whatsoever is dearest unto you, that you will vouchsafe so much commiseration unto a most afflicted woman as to be my means unto her sacred Majesty that I may by her divine self be permitted to come to prostrate myself at her feet to beg for mercy for my Lord. Oh! let me, I beseech you in this my great distress, move you to have this compassion of all I sue for, and in doing so you shall oblige me to acknowledge myself most unto you and to pray for your honour and prosperity. So kept alive only with hope to obtain mercy, I restlessly remain the most unhappy and miserable

Elizabeth Southampton."

We have no letters to the Secretary from the Countess of Rutland. Neither are there as yet available any letters exchanged between her and her husband. Whether they have been lost, destroyed, or even never written, is so far a matter of speculation. We may think, if we choose, that the young Countess, daughter of Sir Philip Sidney, who is described by her contemporaries as a lady of the rarest accomplishments and most gentle disposition, rejoiced to be delivered of the man she had married less than two years before. But we are not forbidden to believe that she stood by him as others did by their husbands, suffered for him and did what she could do to save him from the block. For more than a month his fate was uncertain. "He hoped to live and was prepared to die." The stones of his dungeon, not less than such reports as will leak through the thickest and highest walls, had hard tales to tell. The spirits of those that had

but recently trodden the very slabs now under his feet before they went to the scaffold were the companions of his captivity.

The two Queens, Ann Boleyn and Catherine Howard, the Earl of Surrey, Admiral Seymour, the Earls of Somerset and of Northumberland, the Lady Jane Grey, Guilford Dudley, her boy-husband, and others; then further back, the ghosts which he himself had conjured from the past and often had smiled at over the footlights with the friend who was now his fellow-sufferer in the same walls: King Henry VI, Clarence, Rivers, Grey, Vaughan, Hastings; the two young Princes, Tyrrell's victims; Buckingham — all had but one warning to the prisoner: "Be absolute for death," they whispered.

Then came days heavier still, with visions of real things: the saw-dusted scaffold draped in black; the statesmen on the stands; the men at arms on guard; the masked henchman, axe in hand; and, in solemn procession, his friends on their way to death. On February 25th it was Essex and Coffe. On the 18th of March, Charles Danvers mounted the scaffold and "put off his gown and doublet in a most cheerful manner, rather like a bridegroom than a prisoner appointed for death".

... If I must die,
I will encounter darkness as a bride
And hug it in mine arms ...

Measure for Measure, III, 1

After Sir Charles Danvers, Sir Gillie Merrick and Blount went the same way. Southampton was also condemned to death and only respited for "perpetual durance" after having been left under sentence of execution for sev-

eral weeks. "His head stood so tickle on his shoulders that a milkmaid, if she be in love, might sigh it off." — *Measure for Measure*, I, 3.

We have seen that Rutland's confessions in the Council and at the trial served the prosecution well. Lord Buckhurst's letter quoted above is strongly suggestive. By "wise conference and handling the matter well" the young man was drawn to confess all he knew and, as is too often the case in such circumstances, what he actually said was probably much colored when put on paper, so as to give his words a heavier weight against his fellow-prisoners than they bore in his own mind. He must have realized this at the trial or shortly after it. He may have been a coward. In that case he would have felt nothing but a sense of relief at the thought that he had saved his neck by pushing Essex to the block. But unless he was a coward or a man of an unusually callous disposition, he must have suffered when he saw the part he had been induced to play. Was he anything like what Shakespeare appears to us to have been, that is, a man of the most exquisite moral sensibility, it must have been agony to him to think of his attitude towards his nearest friends at the hour of their common distress. He did not spare himself, but had he proved stronger in the face of death, he might have avoided saying more against them than was unavoidable. He, who had prized true friendship as the greatest of the gifts of fortune, who held himself "in nothing so ambitious as in the good remembrance of his friends", who had promised himself to be true to them despite the henchman's axe, had played the false friend to those whom he loved best. He was young, inexperienced, and had craftily been led into what seemed a betrayal of those he cherished

in his heart's core, in his heart of hearts. One was put to death, the other imprisoned for life. Who can tell how often the spirits of the dead haunted his cell in dreary days and sleepless nights? Two pictures of poignant reality must have recurred every time he thought of Essex's death. The first one was the recollection of their leaving London in March 1599 for the Irish expedition amidst the enthusiastic cheerings of the people calling blessings on Essex's head.

... Stalls, bulks, windows,
Are smother'd up, leads fill'd and ridges hors'd
With variable complexions: all agreeing
In earnestness to see him...

Coriolanus, II, 1.

And every time that the prisoner would recollect those eager faces and loud cheers, the other picture would present itself to him in mocking, bitter contrast. They are on horse again in the streets of London, Essex, Southampton, Rutland; again divers noblemen are with them, on the way from Essex House to the City. But the streets, once so full, are barren and cold; the faces at the windows and on the doorsteps, few and dull. No deafening plaudits; a gloomy sullen silence has fallen on the city. The same people, once so boisterously enthusiastic, are now cowed by fear and instinctively hostile to those whom it would be death to follow. Then, confusion, panic; a few muskets fired; some blows hopelessly given and received; the flight back to Essex House by the river and the surrender to the Queen's troops; the Tower. How often and how bitterly must the prisoner have realized the uncertainty of favour with the populace:

... He that trusts to you,
 Where he should find you lions finds you hares;
 Where foxes, geese: you are no surer, no,
 Than is the coal of fire upon the ice,
 Or hailstone in the sun ...
 With every minute you do change a mind;
 And call him noble that was now your hate,
 Him vile that was your garland ...

Coriolanus, I, 1.

Thus, fear of death, regret, remorse, contempt of man were Rutland's broodings in his cell. He must have left the Tower another man than he entered it. The poet changed with the man. In later years he must have often been haunted by the visions of these hours of agony.

On May 6th, Rutland was taken in a barge to the Council at York House along with Sandys and Mountjoy. The greatness of their crime was again impressed upon them. They submitted to the Queen's mercy and were taken back to the Tower. On May 11th they were taken there again and fined. The sums had been fixed by special Commission. Rutland's fine was subsequently reduced from £30,000 to £10,000. On May 16th he wrote to his uncle John Manners:

"The greatness of my misfortune has made me more silent than I would have been because I should be sorrie to add any greife to my frendes in the remembrance of my mishapps which I assure you I have more greved for then any wordly thing, that I should live to geve cause of discomfort to my best frendes and hasarde a stayne uppon my house; but att the first the cleerness of my owne hart breed in me a strong hope of good, and since it hath pleased God and her Majesty to be so favourable as I doubt not but live to be some comfort unto my poor house, although my estate is like to be much meaner than

it was, which I thank God I greatly esteeme not . . . As yet I am wher I was, but hope of further liberty, and then if you come uppe it will be a great comfort to me to see you, which I much desire."

By July it was definitely approved by the Queen that Rutland and a few others were to be released from the Tower and confined to several places during her pleasure, under the custody of reliable persons. Rutland wrote to Cecil, asking to be allowed to stay at the house of his cousin, Francis Fortescue, but his request was unsuccessful. He was sent to his uncle, Roger Manners' estate of Uffington in Leicestershire. He had been a prisoner for six months. An order was issued by the Privy Council commanding him to forbear from appearance in Parliament and not to stir further than the place indicated to him. He asked of Cecil for "only so much enlargement" as might enable him to visit the land he was compelled to sell, and to have the liberty of his own home. He was, however, kept under strict custody. Mr. Roger Manners having absented himself from the Uffington estate on his own business, a letter from the Lords of the Council intimated to him that it was his duty to stay at Uffington with his nephew. In August 1602 the Earl wrote to Cecil: "You will not blame my importunity if you rightly consider with what grief and penitence I draw on this dreary life." Hamlet says to Horatio: "Thou would'st not think how ill all's here about my heart. . ."

The young Countess had rejoined her husband in his enforced dwelling place, where they found little comfort. The house was ill furnished with food and fuel. Its owner wrote to Cecil that "want of wood and firing can no way be helped, because it can no way be here provided". Rutland complained to the Privy Council of the trouble laid on his

poor tenants who daily brought him fuel and other necessities, seventeen or eighteen miles through a foul country. Hunting and hawking in the company of his own servants were the only pleasures of the banished nobleman. A sad, but strangely attractive picture of his wife is given us by the pen of Roger Manners who confesses himself to be no great friend of hers: "My Lady, to whom I am not partial, never hawked at all; she hath hunted but twice since her coming into this country, the last time was at least forty days since; her behaviour and apparel suitable to her disposition, which inclineth much more to melancholy and sorrow than otherwise, in regard to the greatness of the offence, the heaviness of her Majesty's displeasure and the present poor estate wherein they stand."

We must pause here over one of the deepest mysteries of the human mind. Why should suffering be the price of genius? "Do you think," asked a great philosopher, "Shakespeare and Goethe would have rhymed, Plato philosophised, and Kant criticised reason, if they had been content with the outward world and felt happy in it? It is only when we feel disillusioned in the real world and to a certain extent estranged from it, that we seek comfort in the world of thought. So long as man has or is promised what will serve and satisfy him, no real achievement of genius is to be expected from him. His attention is riveted to himself. When his wishes are thwarted, his hopes forlorn, and he faces unavoidable renunciation, then only will he ask himself, what is this world. The painter gives the answer with his brush; the poet in his rhymes. Goethe said: 'Suffering alone elevates us above the world.' It also purifies us and sometimes carries our mind away to regions of sublime contemplation. On these heights it matters not indeed whether it is

from a palace, or through a dungeon's railings that we look at the golden sunset."

The reader will supply the quotations from *Hamlet* and *Lear*.

Chapter XII.

The Dark Plays

"Shakespeare during these years was not a happy man, and it is quite likely that he felt at times even an intense melancholy, bitterness, contempt, anger, possibly even loathing and despair."

— Prof. A. C. Bradley

The sources of Measure for Measure — Mariana of moated grange — A fingerprint — The main source of the drama a true story — Coincidences and clues — "Antony and Cleopatra" — "Coriolanus" — More clues in "Macbeth" — A fingerprint in "King Lear".

WE HAVE compared the historical and literary analysis of *Hamlet* with what we know of Roger Manners. We find the sources of the play, its local color, its moral and philosophical character, and its general tone corresponding to the Earl's days in college, in Italy, in Denmark, and to his part in Essex's rebellion and trial. The facts converge on one conclusion. To deny Rutland's authorship, we must either admit a set of miraculous accidental coincidences, or else imagine some mysterious poet who somehow became a constant shadow of the Earl and lived invisibly through all his actions and adventures. We shall now examine the other plays of this period in order to ascertain whether or not

we may find in them some personal marks of the author.

Measure for Measure is one of the most beautiful dramas in the First Folio, and Dr. Kittredge's remark that our Shakespearean criticisms are naively perverse applies very pointedly in this instance. The play is censored by British critics as an altogether vitiated composition, something like a string of Schubert variations played by a deaf monkey on an ill-tuned Stradivarius. The reaction of a sound mind to such a piece of work is obvious. On the other hand, the reaction of an artistically blind mind or an ear naively perverse to real music may be similar revulsion. Who is to blame, the poet or his censors? Let the reader judge.

A critic finds in the play "a terrible and morbid pessimism that can only have escaped from a spirit in sore trouble." From our standpoint, this is not hard to account for. We have seen the poet in duress in the Tower; some of his friends had lost their lives; others were prisoners like him; all had been in public disgrace and under threat of death. Such experiences are not forgotten in a few months. The play is a tragicomedy in the full meaning of the term. There runs through it a distinct vein of uncanny jocosity. This is well apparent to our Shakespeare commentators and heavily censored by them. One critic thinks the comical and the tragic events are equally bordering on the hateful: the one disgusting, the other horrible; another finds the air stifling and the results degrading; to a third, Claudio's 'Nay, hear me, Isabel . . . seems abject and clamorous and is the most dreadful mistake in all the dramas of Shakespeare; Isabella, cries another one, is "a simple procuress". Let us open the play. The air might well be stifling, for good reasons. The scenes are laid in the palace of a villainous and murderous despot; in a brothel, with a bawd, a pimp, and

two brothel customers; and in the cells and passages of a prison with two men awaiting execution, one a weakling, the other, a dissolute and perpetually drunken criminal — small pure breathing in all that. Claudio's outcry to Isabel is pitiable, no doubt. But all men fear death. Some are stronger than their fear; some are not. And nothing is more natural than a struggle between noble and base impulses in a human heart. Claudio is a weak man, though a loving brother. His first impulse on hearing of Angelo's infamous bargain for his life is a generous one (III., 1):

Why give you me this shame?
..... If I must die,
I will encounter darkness as a bride,
And hug it in mine arms.

Isabella is reassured and proud of him. She tells him more:

..... Dost thou think, Claudio,
If I would yield him my virginity,
Thou mightst be freed!

And then, "the fear of something after death" making "cowards of us all", he utters the miserable: "O, Isabel!" and, on Isabel's "Be ready, Claudio, for your death tomorrow", he echoes:

Death is a fearful thing.

His feet are cold and he cries forth the plaintive: "Nay hear me, Isabel!" Despicable, indeed; perhaps abject; but can this be called a mistake of the dramatist? It is mercilessly true to life; therefore, poetic virtue, not a mistake. Claudio is no Coriolanus; he is Claudio.

Yet, however real they may be dramatically, contemptible Claudio, distressed Julietta, dejected Mariana, are but light sketches among the pictures of the play. It is Isabella's speeches to Angelo that are its transcendent, peerless splendour. And with good reason, for a much sadder story than that of Claudio and Isabel has been discovered as the main source of Shakespeare's inspiration. In the year of 1547 two citizens of a little town not far from Milan, then under the rule of Emperor Charles V, had a quarrel in which one killed the other. The slayer was arrested on the spot, brought to jail and tried. The Spanish Regidor sentenced him to death. His wife, a woman "of bewitching beauty", went to the Regidor and, throwing herself at his feet, implored him for her husband's life. The name of this deputy of the Emperor is not given in the local chronicles, where he appears only as "the Spanish Count". He rejected the ransom which the woman offered him and promised mercy at the price of her love. Her mother-in-law persuaded her that her soul would be free from a sin committed against her will (*Meas. for Meas.* III, I)

What sin you do to save a brother's life,
Nature dispenses with the deed so far
That it becomes a virtue

She made the supreme sacrifice and, the next morning, she heard of her husband's execution

Isabella Has yet the deputy sent my brother's pardon?

Duke He hath released him, Isabel, from the world.
His head is off, and sent to Angelo

Isab Nay, but it is not so!

Duke It is no other.

Show your wisdom, daughter, in your close patience.

Isab. O, I will to him and tear out his eyes!

The unhappy woman betook herself to Milan and claimed justice from the Viceroy of the Emperor, Don Fernando Gonzaga, Duke of Arriano, brother of the Duke of Mantua, Federigo Gonzaga, Count of *Mountferrat*.

O worthy prince, dishonour not your eye
By throwing it on any other object,
Till you have heard me in my true complaint
And given me justice, justice, justice, justice!

Meas. for Meas., V., I.

Don Fernando listened to her and instructed her to be patient and keep her secret for some time. "As the matter now stands, he will avoid your accusation... Therefore, fasten your ear to my advising, to the love I have in doing good... It lies much in your holding up." Two months later, he invited the Regidor to a public feast at his palace in Milan. After the meal he took the man to his private room, charged him with his crime, and ordered him to pay the widow a sum of three thousand ducats. He then brought him into the state hall, where the Spanish Count was confronted with his victim. The man was crushed in shame and terror.

"Hast thou or word, or wit, or impudence
That yet can do thee office? If thou hast,
Rely upon it, till my tale be heard..."

Meas. for Meas., V., 1.

Don Fernando had a Spaniard's idea of honor. He commanded the Count to marry the woman and thus to give full redress to her dignity and good name. A priest was called so that the marriage ritual could be duly performed. Don Fernando handed the lady the three thousand ducats as

her dowry. Then he spoke to the man: "You shall be beheaded to-morrow for the murder of that woman's husband."

"Marry her instantly,
Do you the office, Friar
But as he adjudged your brother . . .
The very mercy of the law cries out
Most audible, even from his proper tongue,
'An Angelo for Claudio death for death!' . . .
. . . . For his possessions,
Although by confiscation they are ours,
We do instate and widow you withal,
To buy you a better husband"

The sentence was carried out and subsequently approved by the Emperor. Had Rutland written *Measure for Measure* in the same mood as he wrote *Othello* and *King Lear*, the play would have been true to history to the end. As it happened, he wrote in a lighter vein: Isabel's honor was untainted and Mariana obtained her husband's pardon.

We know that in matters of circumstantial evidence a feather, and less than a feather, may be a decisive clue and may hang a man. We must say a few more words on these lines. A mote of evidence — a few drops of ink murder William Shakspeare the playwright as surely as a horse-dose of strychnine will kill a child.

In the first act of *The Merchant of Venice* Nerissa asks her mistress: Do you remember, lady, in your father's time, a Venetian, a scholar and a soldier, that came here in company of the Marquis of Mountferrat?" Portia gives herself away to the audience in her eager assent. The young Venetian is Bassanio. But who was the Marquis of Mountferrat? The title is an historical one and the reader may

have noticed it on a preceding page. It belonged to the family of the Gonzagas of Mantua who were Counts of Mountferrat (not Marquesses). The critics who would still hold to the Stratford legends must either assume that Shakspeare the actor-playwright invented the name "out of his own head" or else that some gentleman in Milan or in Mantua, being concerned about the historical ornamentation of a play which his friend of Shoreditch was then working upon, was struck with the idea that *The Merchant of Venice* would be not inconsiderably enriched by a distant allusion to Duke Vincenzo Gonzaga, late ruler of Mantua, who had no connection of any kind with the plot and characters of the drama and about whom not a head in the pit or the groundlings of the Swan, the Curtain, the Rose, the Red Bull, or the Theatre could have the slightest inkling. Something like quoting Sam Weller's dropped *h*'s to an Eskimo. If to the coincidences of circumstances, names, times, and places in *Two Gentlemen*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, and *The Merchant of Venice* we add those of *Measure for Measure* and *Hamlet*, we must recognize the logical impossibility of William Shakspeare's being the author of the five plays. This conclusion is corroborated by the fact that the sources of these dramas were written in Latin, in French, and in Italian, and that not an iota appears in contemporary books or scripts to show that Shakspeare knew a word of these languages. But it must be confessed that, as soon as we leave the ruts and shackles of common sense and logic, and turn to the smooth methods of the tradition of Stratford, the difficulties are swiftly brushed away.

Doubtless, William Shakspeare went to school, because there was a grammar school at Stratford and, according to many learned orthodox writers, "the inference that he

went there is entirely reasonable". *Doubtless*, he acquired there a perfect mastery of Latin, because other critics assert that "Shakespeare certainly studied Latin and probably Greek", and that "he could almost certainly read Latin with as much facility as a cultivated Englishman reads French".

Doubtless, he learned Italian, because Sir Sidney Lee wrote that "there is no reason to doubt that the dramatist possessed sufficient acquaintance with Italian", and *doubtless* he learned it from the best teacher in London because "his acquaintance with John Floric, a teacher of Italian, is not open to doubt".

Doubtless, he learned French at the time he was looking after gentlemen's horses at the Curtain in Shoreditch and at the Globe on the Bankside because, as we hear from other deeply learned men, "of modern languages French was the easiest for an Elizabethan Englishman to acquire".

Doubtless, he traveled in Italy and *doubtless* he visited Milan, Mantua, Padua, and Venice, because "no doubt is permissible" on anything devoid of proof or evidence, where his authorship is concerned.

Doubtless, he went to Denmark, where he visited Elsinore and Kronborg, and *doubtless* he studied Danish speech and customs because, as shown by Yan Steffanson, "it is a sheer impossibility that Shakespeare could have knowledge of this kind from any book of the time in England", and because *doubtless* is the consecrated term in orthodox biographies for cases when no contemporary testifies and no tradition rumors that he did what he should have done.

It should, however, be kept in mind that very few orthodox writers will admit the possibility of Shakespeare's voyages to Italy and to Denmark. This simplifies the matter:

Doubtless, he knew everything about Milan, Mantua, Padua, and Venice, and about Elsinore and Kronborg without ever having set foot on Italian or on Danish soil, because he knew everything without having learned anything. As Mr. John Bailey assures us, he "knew all about the law without ever having been a lawyer, and all about the sea without ever having set foot on a ship".

✧ In *Antony and Cleopatra* we will again look at Shakespeare's own inspiration; on what is added or altered in the source of the drama. "Shakespeare," says Sir Sidney Lee, "is no slavish disciple of Plutarch. The leading events and characters... glow in his verse with a heroic and poetic glamour of which Plutarch gives faint conception." This of course is quite true. But it may be said of any one of Shakespeare's works. Our question is, what had he to say for himself? Plutarch wrote of Cleopatra's fascination and charms: "Now her beawtie, as it is reported, was not so passing, as unmatchable of other women, nor yet suche as upon present view did anamour men with her; but so sweete was her company and conversation that a man could not possibly but be taken," etc.

This is echoed in the lines (II., 2):

Age cannot wither her, nor custom stale
Her infinite variety. Other women cloy
The appetites they feed, but she makes hungry
Where most she satisfies, for vilest things
Become themselves in her.

But there was no portrait of Cleopatra in Plutarch. In Shakespeare, at her first interview with the Messenger bringing to Egypt the news of Antony's marriage to Octavia, Cleopatra "strikes him down"; "hales him up and down", and calls out in a frenzy of jealousy and fury (II., 5):

Hence,

Horrible villain, or I'll spurn thine eyes
Like balls before me. I'll unhair thy head.
Thou shalt be whipped with wire, and stewed in brine,
Smarting in lingering pickle.

In a following scene the Messenger is again brought before her (III., 3):

Cleo. Is she tall like me?

Mess. She is not, madam.

Cleo. Did'st hear her speak? Is she shrill-tongued or low?

Mess. Madam, I heard her speak; she is low-voiced.

Cleo. That's not so good; he cannot like her long . . .
Bear'st thou her face in mind? Is't long or round?

Mess. Round, even to faultiness.

Cleo. Her hair, what colour?

Mess. Brown, Madam; and her forehead
As low as she would wish it.

Cleo. There's gold for thee.

Thou must not take my former sharpness ill;
I will employ thee back again: I find thee
Most fit for business.

It is evident that Octavia is presented as a contrast to Cleopatra in every point, and in giving a description of the former, Shakespeare indirectly suggests to the reader Cleopatra's portrait as plainly as possible. We can see her tall, oval-faced, with a high forehead, hair not dark, and a high-pitched voice. This is, however, nothing but fiction, for no historical picture of Cleopatra is known to us. Well may we ask, which Queen is this? — Elizabeth Tudor, according to Stowe's Chronicle, was "tall of stature, strong in every limb and joint, her fingers small and long, her voice loud and shrill". Her face was long, her forehead high, her chin sharp-pointed; her hair auburn. Following Shakespeare's moral

characteristics of Cleopatra, we may say wanton, conceited, jealous, cruel. Such exactly as the Queen of England would appear to those who suffered from her tyranny. We turn to a scene from a comedy enacted not on the stage, but in real life. The place, London; the time, 1580; the actors, a Queen and an Ambassador from another Queen. Some parts of the dialogue are missing; the reader must supply them for himself. The first lady "is earnest"; she desires to know "*whose hair is the best, which of the two is the fairest*". The Courtier is careful of his words:

"The fairness of both, your Majesty, is not their worst fault."

"Your Majesty and Queen Mary are the fairest ladies in the Court of England and Scotland."

"Your Majesty is whiter, but our Queen is very lusome."

"Your Majesty is of a most noble stature. Our Queen, I think, is 'ne highest of the two."

"Then is she over-high!"

This is the conversation between Elizabeth Tudor and Sir James Melville, the Queen of Scots' ambassador, as recorded in the latter's Memoirs. As mentioned before, the scenes between Cleopatra and the Messenger are not in Plutarch. We are again faced by a strange coincidence such as the numerous coincidences we have recorded in these notes, and our natural conclusion is — the ironical scenes in the tragedy were suggested to the poet by Melville's adroit fencing with Elizabeth's jealousy. There is nothing in our books to show Shakspere's hostility to the Queen of England, and it is hard to imagine Melville confiding his intimate recollections to a London actor. But at the Court the characteristic words must have been a frequent subject of subdued comments before and after the execution of the Queen of

Scots. And if there were in England men who had suffered too deeply to forget, Rutland was one of them.

Timon of Athens is written in a more painful strain than even the four great tragedies. There are no individual marks of the author in this drama. But why, as Prof. Boas has observed, should the Greek misanthropist talk *as if he had graduated on the Cam*? And we cannot fail to remark the extraordinary insight of these penstrokes:

Piety and fear,
Religion to the gods, peace, justice, truth,
Domestic awe, night-rest, and neighbourhood,
Instruction, manners, mysteries, and trades,
Degrees, observances, customs, and laws
Decline to your confounding contraries,
And let confusion live.

The "astronomical rapidity and breadth" of these lines reflect a masterful understanding of the dynamics of the state and the laws that govern it. Was this conceived and written behind the stage of the Globe or the Blackfriars, between the acts of blood-reeking tragedies and slap-stick farces, or at Westminster? It was natural, says Prof. Sir Walter Raleigh, that Shakespeare's politics should take their color from his *courtly companions*, whose business was politics. Natural indeed. But actors from Shoreditch and from the Bankside were not the companions of the Lords and the Knights engaged in politics or attending at the Court. Rutland was one of them.

Coriolanus is another instance of the difficulties of the unsophisticated reader who reads Shakespeare for himself and enjoys, after his own fashion, every line in the plays. So long as he keeps to the text, his delight and admiration are all his own; but as soon as he opens the books of more

learned connoisseurs, his mind is poisoned. He meets irreconcilable discordances in lieu of harmony. Strange things he never suspected are disclosed to him. The drama, it seems, betrays "a comparative emptiness, pointing to weariness and reaction". It partly shows Shakespeare's ignorance, partly wilful distortion of historical events. Another note seems to reassure the reader: "*Coriolanus* is perhaps the most perfect masterpiece of dramatic art." Fortunately we are not called upon to pronounce a verdict on these contradictions. But turning to our problem, we note an extremely puzzling feature of the tragedy — again an instance of the poet's unexpected and seemingly inexplicable deviation from the source of his play. Shakespeare, says Prof. Boas, is led into the most serious falsification of facts that occur in any of the plays. "He sins partly through ignorance, partly through wilfully shutting his eyes to some of Plutarch's statements. He represents the Plebeians of the early Republic as if they were the rabble of the Rome of the Caesars. The London mob served as model for both. The orderly and impressive demonstration — *secessio in Montem Sacrum* — offering no creature any hurt or violence, or making any show of actual rebellion, followed by their obtaining a number of privileges and the right to elect their tribunes, is degraded into a street riot and is made a subordinate episode . . . caused by a dearth of corn." With one exception, these remarks are manifestly correct. But there can be no question of Shakespeare's ignorance in this case. There was nothing to suggest the "most serious falsification" to a half ignorant writer. With Plutarch's clear and impressive picture before him, he would have reproduced it with docile punctuality. The only reasonable explanation lies in Prof. Boas' alternative: Shakespeare consciously, or perhaps half consciously,

ignored what he could not fail to see. Yet an intentional or even half intentional action must have a motive behind it. What was he to Coriolanus, or Coriolanus to him? But it was quite natural for Rutland, looking backward to the treacherous — so it must have appeared to him — indifference of the Londoners on the miserable day of Essex's rebellion, to be led by his emotion more than by his knowledge. A poet's bleeding heart lends beauty to his verse.

Another passage in the drama, just referred to, also deserves our attention. The "alarums and excursions" in the *Histories*, in *Macbeth*, in *King Lear*, are conventional scenes which other dramatists pictured equally well, whether they knew war by personal experience or never had left London. But some lines in *Coriolanus* are quite exceptional in this respect. The Romans have taken Corioli owing to Caius Martius' daring exploits. The Roman general, Cominius, offers him one tenth of the plunder. Martius coldly declines the offer. The soldiers acclaim him. There is a long flourish; drums and trumpets; the soldiers cast up their caps, and lances; Cominius and Martius "stand bare". But Martius is annoyed by these noisy demonstrations:

No more, I say For that I have not washed
My nose that bled, or soiled some debile wretch,
Which, without note, here's many else have done,
You shout me forth in acclamations hyperbolical . . .

What a jarring false note! An actor would not have slipped into the misplaced academic term. The surname "Coriolanus" is given him by Cominius "with all the applause and clamour of the host". His answer is: "I will go wash; And when my face is washed fair, you shall perceive Whether I blush or no." And then a thought suddenly occurs to him:

The gods begin to mock me.
I, that now refused most princely gifts,
Am bound to beg of my Lord General.

Cominius is quick to answer:

Take it; 'tis yours. What is it?
Cor. I some time lay, here in Corioli,
At a poor man's house; he used me kindly.
He cried to me. I saw him prisoner;
But then Aufidius was within my view,
And wrath o'erwhelmed my pity. I request you
To give my poor host freedom.
Com. O, well begged!
Were he the butcher of my son, he should
Be free as wind. Deliver him, Titus.
Lartius Martius, his name?
Cor. By Jupiter, forgot.
I am weary; yea, my memory is tired.
Have we no wine here?

This is truly magnificent. The realism is so forceful that in recitation and even in reading silently we convert the verses into prose. There are no such flashes of reality in other contemporary plays, and we cannot help thinking that the writer who knew war so well must have breathed the hot and heavy air of the battlefield himself.

In the second act of *Coriolanus*, a messenger describes the enthusiasm of the crowd at the hero's appearance in the city. The Folio had:

I have seen the *dumb* men throng to see him, and
The blind to hear him speak.

This ridiculous blunder was reproduced in all subsequent editions of the plays and is still repeated in modern editions. Our Stratfordians will count and name Shakspeare's

grandchildren and grandparents, and discuss the quarters and bushels of malt which he sold, but odious errors in the poet's verses pass unchallenged. There can be no doubt that Shakespeare wrote: "the *deaf* men thronged to see him, and the blind to hear him speak." Those who could not hear Coriolanus had to be content with seeing him; those who could not see were content to hear. As it stands printed, the line suggests that the *dumb* men, though they *could* listen — a dumb man is not necessarily deaf — stopped their ears not to hear Coriolanus. The antithesis is lost in the accepted reading. Not even the intolerable *mbm* in the words *dumb men* has ever jarred on an actor's ears or on a scholar's sense of euphony.

Othello pictures Venice in the same way as *Shylock*, but the strongest evidence from our standpoint is not the details of the Venetian topography and social background. It lies in the fact that Shakespeare introduced in the text various particulars from at least four different Italian sources, not one of which was available for him in London. The main plot was taken from *Il Capitano Moro*, one of the *Cento Novelle* of Giovanni Battista Giraldi Cinthio da Ferrara. Some parts of the dialogue in *Othello* are as near to the text of this story as the trial scene in *Shylock* is to *Il Pecorone*. The episodes added to Cinthio's story from other sources are: Desdemona's elopement, her secret marriage, her father — old Brabantio's complaint to the Doges' Council, and his death following shortly after. — "I am glad thy father is dead," says her uncle. All these particulars reproduce the actual details of the love story (1575) of Conte Annibale Collalto and his cousin Donna Bianca Maria, the only daughter of old Conte Rambaldo Collalto and Donna Miranda Capodivacca: — "I am glad at soul I

have no other daughter," cries Brabantio. The parents would not consent to the marriage of the cousins and Donna Bianca declared she would take the veil. Her mother, the Contessa *Miranda*, her uncle and aunt, Conte Antonio and Contessa *Giulia*, took her to the Convent of St. Stefano in *Padua*; but shortly after, Conte Annibale with his cousin, Conte Guido Brandolino (married to Contessa *Violante Collalto* — we meet these names in other plays) appeared unexpectedly at the convent and, producing all necessary papers, authentic or perhaps forged, to the surprised abbess, carried the girl away to the church of San Lorenzo, where a priest celebrated the marriage.

Conte Rambaldo complained to the Council of Ten, asserting that he would take revenge into his own hands if justice was refused him, and adding that at the instigation of her lover his daughter had made attempts upon his life with witchcraft and poison, *con stregherie e veneni*: — "By spells, and medicines, bought of mountebanks . . . with some mixtures powerful o'er blood, or some dram, conjur's to this effect." The poet gave a more romantic touch to the real story: Brabantio does not accuse Desdemona of attempting to poison him, but charges Othello with the use of drugs and love filters to explain his daughter's unnatural infatuation. The story is recorded in the decision of the Council, *Capi del Consiglio dei Dieci*, in Venice, and in the *Lettere di Rettori ed altre Chroniche*, in Padua.

The other sources of the drama were Italian chronicles recording the public services of a patrician of Venice, Cristoforo Moro, Podesta of Ravenna and of Padua, Providitore in Faenza and Romagna, Governor-General of Cyprus, Commander of a fleet in Candia, Ambassador to Pope Leo X, etc.: — "I have done the State some service, and they know

it." We also find in the Chronicles the fact that in the year 1570 a Turkish fleet left Constantinople for Cyprus, then suddenly turned towards the Isle of Rhodes, was joined there by another Turkish squadron, and resumed her course toward Cyprus.

In what manner, we ask, could the patrons of the Globe be interested in the movements of a Turkish fleet in the Mediterranean forty years before the performance of *Othello* in London? Yet the particulars of these manoeuvres are described in the drama with the same punctilious accuracy which we found so puzzling and so significant in other Shakespeare plays.

Second Senator. A Turkish fleet, and bearing up to Cyprus!

An Officer. A messenger from the galleys.

Duke. Now, the business!

Sailor. The Turkish preparation makes for Rhodes...

Duke. How say you by this change?

First Senator. This cannot be,

By no assay of reason, 'tis a pageant,

To keep us in false gaze When we consider

The importancy of Cyprus to the Turk,

Duke. Nay, in all confidence, he's not for Rhodes.

Off. Here is more news.

Mess. The Ottomites,

Steering with due course to the isle of Rhodes,

Have there injointed them with an after-fleet.

. . . . and now they do restem

Their backward course, bearing with frank appearance

Their purposes toward Cyprus.

Duke. 'Tis certain then for Cyprus. —

Valiant Othello, we must straight employ you

Against the general enemy Ottoman.

We must take William Shakspeare for what we know him to have been — an actor, a manager, and a man of busi-

ness, mainly concerned with providing his theatre with hot new plays every fortnight. We may, *for the sake of argument*, credit him with self-acquired knowledge of Italian enabling him to catch the subtleties of the text in his Italian sources; but as we have remarked before, these Italian chronicles were not to be found in London, and even if, by some unaccountable means, he could lay hands on them, there was no profit in painstakingly collecting such insignificant particulars as St. Gregory's well in Milan, St. Luke's church in Padua, Bergamo's sails or Verona's galleys, and the manoeuvres of the Turkish ships between Cyprus and Rhodes, to serve them to the patrons of the Globe, who would not understand them. On the other hand, we know that Rutland was a complete master of Italian, and it is obvious that as an amateur dramatist he wrote not for the sake of the shillings and pence to be collected on the Bankside or at Blackfriars, but for the delights of writing. It is also probable that, apart from the Chronicles, much of his information was picked up in his commerce with Venetian and Paduan nobility. Such events of recent *chronique scandaleuse* as the kidnapping of Donna Bianca from the convent of San Lorenzo must have been fresh recollections in local aristocratic circles at the time Rutland visited Italy.

To realize the full weight of the evidence we find in *Othello*, we must add to it the abundant details of precise topography, the true presentation of Lombardian and Venetian customs and manners, and the surprising accuracy of the allusions to historical events; in short, the sum total of coincidences we have noted in *Two Gentlemen*, *The Taming of the shrew*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Measure for Measure*, and *Hamlet*. We must also, as observed before, bear in mind that every new item of evidence adds to the previously col-

lected evidence not so much more, but so many times more logical weight. Critics who have studied the sources in Italian archives find Shakespeare's knowledge of Venice and Padua unaccountable. Rutland's familiarity with the two cities needs no explanation.

Macbeth, as *Othello*, is technically a perfect dramatic piece. It has none of the absurdly incongruous topical interpolations of *Hamlet*. The place is Scotland; the time six centuries before the Stuarts in England. Could we expect in the tragedy any connecting links with a playwright of James I's reign? We find the usual ever-recurring images from the chase and falconry, and we have quoted in an earlier chapter some of the lines echoing the Latin comedies of the Cambridge undergraduate. We need not repeat them here.

It can hardly be questioned that *Hamlet*, *Othello* and *Macbeth* could have no happy ending. The plays would be ridiculous melodrama if they did. Not so *Lear*. There is poetic justice in the death of the murderers in the former three dramas. There is a grievous fault against this esthetic principle in *King Lear*. As the curtain falls, we are not only sad, as in the other tragedies, we are dissatisfied, miserable. "Why does Cordelia die?" asks an English critic. "I suppose no reader ever failed to ask it with something more than pain — to ask it, if only for a moment, in bewilderment and dismay and even perhaps in tones of protest." Hero, Isabel, Hermione are unhappy before being crowned in joy. Desdemona and Juliet are happy before they die. But Lear and Cordelia are punished after having been miserable, most miserable. This is too cruel. And it is the more objectionable in that the author's two sources, the crude *Chronicle of King Leir*, and the story of "the Paphlagonian king" in Sidney's "Arcadia", suggested the esthetically true ending. The two

lines in *The Chronicle* when, happily united to her unjust, but loving and repentant father, Cordelia kneels down before him, are infinitely touching, despite their childish pleonasm:

For look, dear father, look, behold and see
Your loving daughter kneeling unto thee.

"Shakespeare would have given a happy end to his tragedy," says Prof. Bradley, "if he had taken the subject in hand a few years later, in the days of *Cymbeline*, and *The Winter's Tale*." This, we feel, is unquestionably true. But, we ask ourselves, how could Shakespeare, to whom our heart and mind were open books, how could he jar so cruelly on our sensibility? There are many gross errors in his plays. There were no clocks in Julius Caesar's time, and no clock therefore could strike in Brutus's orchard. We know that Roman ladies wore no gloves and used no handkerchiefs. We know that Julio Romano could not have made a statue of Hermione a thousand years before he was born. But these absurdities delight instead of annoying us. They do not interfere with the poet's loyalty to human nature. As we know that his sense of dramatic justice was sure, we have to look for an explanation of the esthetic mistake in *Lear*. The laws of the mind are natural laws, and the reason is not hard to find: the poet was bereft of his usual clear insight because his mind had lost its divine serenity.

A modern critic has observed that the situations in *King Lear* are often "rather intellectually than visibly dramatic, that to see them helps little toward their interpretation". The tragedy is pathetic, not dramatic, for action is the very essence of drama. If there is no acting to help the spectators, they should be helped the more by the dialogue. But the same

writer tells us that the dialogue is so condensely significant and so excessively compact, as to be occasionally obscure. We may add that there is neither concentration of interest nor progressive intensity of suspense. There is amazing beauty, grandeur, depth; but neither effective dialogue, nor effective action. We ask ourselves, do actors write such tragedies? And we can only say, no actor ever did. A poet will occasionally write a play not intended for the footlights; an actor will not. He writes for the stage, and he will adapt his work to his special purpose.

We will now turn to the priceless *lapsus calami* in the tragedy. The angry father has left the castle of his eldest daughter, where he was treated with inhuman cruelty, and comes to live with his other child. He is well assured, or believes he is assured of a warm welcome and kind hospitality. He complains to Regan of what he has suffered under Goneril's roof and lavishes curses on the ungrateful daughter. Regan remonstrates with him:

O, the blest gods!

So will you wish on me when the rash mood is on.

Lear. No, Regan, thou shalt never have my curse;
 Thy tender-hefted nature shall not give
 Thee o'er to harshness. Her eyes are fierce, but thine
 Do comfort and not burn 'Tis not in thee
 To grudge my pleasures, to cut off my train,
 To bandy hasty words, to scant my sizes,
 And, in conclusion, to oppose the bolt
 Against my coming in.

What is the meaning of the quaint words "to scant my sizes?" The phrase was a current one in Shakespeare's time, but, of all England, in one place only. A *sizar*, at Cambridge, was an undergraduate who obtained his daily meals gratu-

itously from the college buttery hatch. At Oxford, such an undergraduate was called a battler. To "scant my sizes" means to *reduce my rations*. Lear says: "She grudged the bread I ate at her house." But he does it in college slang. We must give full consideration to these drops of ink and their unconscious testimony. To any one but a college student the words had no meaning whatever. The motley audience at the Globe or at Blackfriars would understand just as much, that is, just as little, if instead of the correct terms, "to scant my sizes", an actor recited "to size my scants". Just as a modern spectator or reader will not hesitate to say the phrase means something more than ungracious words and something less than bolting a daughter's gates on her old father. Without understanding the words, we will perceive that the text is a *gradatio* leading to a climax. We would understand no more unless we consulted the glossary.

But we must go a little further. The passage is intensely pathetic. Lear is cursing Goneril and appealing piteously to Regan; entreating, almost begging for her kindness; half deceiving, half abasing himself to ill-disguised flattery. Could the poet have wilfully introduced in the speech a phrase which, to the pit and the galleries, had no meaning at all and to the few men from Cambridge who understood it suggested, instead of "every inch a king," a ridiculous cartoon — the figure of a hungry truant warming his empty stomach or collecting his rags after a sound whipping. Shakspeare the actor could not have done this. In all probability he never heard the words. If he had, they never could have occurred to him in the context. That Shakespeare did it, we know. That he should have done it intentionally, we can never admit. It was a slip of his quill. And a happy slip: it gives the Spear-shaker away. He who wrote the line "To bandy hasty

words, to scant my sizes . . ." must have worn cap and gown on the Cam. This absurd image is stronger evidence than a score of witnesses could have been. They might have lied. The verse printed in the Folio is a material fact which we can touch with our own fingers, and it spells: Cambridge.

Chapter XIII.

The Last Plays

"The comfort and the delight found by genius in itself and its creations and the inferiority under which other men appear to it give it so lofty a strain as to make it wholly indifferent to fame among them."

— Schopenhauer

The Queen's death — A scene in "The Winter's Tale" — "Cymbeline" and the story of Lady Arabella Stuart — Some remarks on "The Tempest" — Shakespeare's presumable collaboration — An incongruous scene in "Pericles".

QUEEN Elizabeth died on March 24, 1603. James I was proclaimed king. The old Queen's ill-will and distrust were the best recommendations in the new sovereign's eyes. He signed an order for Southampton's release from the Tower even before he left Scotland. All Essex's friends were soon in the highest favor in Court. On his progress from Newark to London James I came to Belvoir Castle, where he was "royally and most plenteously" entertained by Roger Manners and his Countess. Ben Jonson's masque "The Metamorphosed Gypsies" was performed before the King on this occasion. He signified his pleasure by knighting the Earl's two brothers, George and Oliver, along with forty-four other gentlemen.

With Elizabeth's death, the danger attached to the plays was no more. It was open to the poet, should he feel so inclined, to claim them as his own. For some reason, he did not choose to do so. The strain had been too long, too painful to recover from it speedily. Certain it is that the poet breathed more freely.

The embassy to Denmark in the summer of 1603 was one of the few occasions on which Rutland took part in public affairs. He lived at Belvoir with from time to time a short visit to London or to some friends in the country. He never appears to have lost the royal good will and seems never to have been at any pains to solicit it otherwise than by the customary New Year's gifts to James I and his Queen. It was unusual that a man of his rank should stand away from the Court, and there is nothing to account for it except, possibly, his indifferent health and, most certainly, his literary occupations. The Court, or Parliament might require Rutland's presence upon occasions. But he who left an unfinished page of *Othello* or *Coriolanus* to attend to his official or social duties would desert London at the first opportunity to resume his interrupted work. He had too much to give to mankind and he possibly felt that his time was short. His love of theatricals never waned and players' companies often came to act at Belvoir. Unfortunately, no records were kept of the performed plays. It will be realized that no dramatist had better opportunities and greater facilities for recasting, polishing, and enriching his writings, and this is the simple explanation of the numerous alterations and additions to the text of the Quartos in the Folio of 1623. A letter to the Earl from his wife, written from Harrington in July 1609, shows the Countess Elizabeth in the light most becoming her rank and station: "Upon your promise for the poore

man having a place in the hospital that my nurse wrote for, I sent her word of it and with all willed her to send me his name, which now I know is Richard Gilbert. Therefore I pray, my Lord, lett him have your letter for it because it will help the poore woman to 20 lbs."

The last plays of Shakespeare were the four romantic dramas: *The Winter's Tale*, *Cymbeline*, *Pericles* and *The Tempest*. *Pericles* was not included in the thirty-six plays of the First Folio and it is generally believed that only a few scenes of the play are Shakespeare's. In *The Winter's Tale*, although the general character of the drama is in perfect harmony with Rutland's mood at the time of its composition, we find no conspicuous marks of the poet's hand. We may note a curious, perhaps, a significant, name. There are among the actors in *The Winter's Tale* three gentlemen at King Leontes' court. Not one of them is given a name in the stage directions; but we find one of them named in the dialogue (V, 2) and named only once; and it is a name which occurs but once in the hundreds of pages of the First Folio:

. . . The news, *Rogero*?

A fingerprint? We may note two other passages in the drama. Hermione, trying to persuade Polixenes, King of Bohemia, to prolong his stay at the Court of Leontes, King of Sicily, says to him:

Will you go yet?
Force me to keep you as a prisoner,
Not like a guest; so you shall pay your fees
When you depart, and save your thanks.

There was a rule of procedure in English law, by which

a person imprisoned on a criminal charge, whether he proved guilty or not, was liable to a certain fee on his enlargement from jail. Lord Chief Justice Campbell, the staunchest of all Stratfordians, who never thought of Shakespeare as a peer, wrote "I believe there is now no tribunal in England where the practice remains, excepting the Houses of Parliament; but the Lord Chancellor and the Speaker of the House of Commons still say to prisoners about to be liberated from the custody of the Black Rod or the Serjeant-at-Arms, 'You are discharged, paying your fees'."

"It is likewise remarkable," says Lord Campbell, "that Cleomenes and Dion, the state messengers who brought back the response from the oracle of Delphi to be given in evidence, are sworn to the genuineness of the document they produce almost in the very words now used by the Lord Chancellor, when an officer presents at the bar of the House of Lords the copy of a record of a court of justice."

You here shall swear . . .
That you, Cleomenes and Dion, have
Been both at Delphos; and from thence have brought
The seal'd up oracle, by the hand delivered
Of great Apollo's priest; and that since then
You have not dared to break the holy seal,
Nor read the secrets in't. . . .

The Winter's Tale, III, 2.

We see no reason why William Shakspeare should talk like a peer. But Rutland sat in the House of Lords ever since he was of age.

Cymbeline is an unfinished work. It seems rather like a set of fragmentary scenes jotted down as parts of a still very roughly outlined plot. A performance of the drama is first mentioned in 1611. The date of composition is unknown.

The semi-historical episodes are taken from Holinshed; the romance of Imogen and Posthumus is from Boccaccio; but the dialogue, as usual, is the poet's own. Never perhaps has he rendered the charm of womanhood in so true, so passionate and yet such pure accents. Was there nothing but fiction in this romantic story, or is it this time again the expression of his sympathy with actual human suffering?

“There must have happened,” wrote a French scholar, Emile Montégut, “in Shakespeare's time among the English aristocracy something similar to the adventure of Posthumus, Imogen and Ioachino [Imogen's slanderer]. A love marriage between two persons of equal condition but unequal rank may have called forth the censure as well as the admiration of the English society.” This is a remarkable instance of genuine critical intuition. Lady Arabella Stuart, first cousin to James I, was the daughter of Charles Stuart, grandson of Margaret Tudor. She was, says a contemporary writer, a woman of tender heart, bright intellect, graceful manners and of no higher ambition than to be mistress of a private and peaceful home. She wrote in a letter to her uncle Shrewbury that she wished to refute the presumed impossibility of a young woman being unable to preserve her purity and innocence among the follies of the Court, and kept apart from them as well as she could. Foreign princes who applied for her hand were dismissed. She would not, she said, wed a man whom she did not know. She fell in love with William Seymour, second son of Lord Beauchamp, who by his mother Catherine Grey was heir to the Suffolk titles to the throne. The eldest son being still alive, Seymour had no claim to the crown, but he was always a possible pretender. In May 1610 the couple were secretly married against the King's formally signified disapproval. When the news

reached James, he was beside himself with anger. Lady Arabella was detained in custody at Lambeth palace, Seymour sent to the Tower. But great sympathy was felt for them in London. The King's displeasure was naturally discussed at Court.

First Gent. You do not meet a man but frowns: our bloods
No more obey the heavens than our courtiers
Still seem as doeth the king.

Second Gent. But what's the matter?

First Gent. His daughter,
... hath referred herself
Unto a poor but worthy gentleman; she's wedded;
Her husband banished; she imprisoned; all
Is outward sorrow ...

... not a courtier,
Although they wear their faces to the bent
Of the king's looks, hath a heart that is not
Glad at the thing they scowl at.

Cymbeline, I., 1.

The secret correspondence between husband and wife was discovered. Lady Arabella was to be brought to Durham. On the way she managed to escape from her escort in a disguise and fled by horse to Blackwell. Seymour was to follow there.

O, for a horse with wings! ...

But first of all,
How may we steal from hence?

.... provide me presently
A franklin's housewife.

Lady Arabella was sick and worn out. "That gentleman," an ostler said, as he held her stirrup, "will hardly reach London." Yet the ride braced her up and she arrived

safely to Blackwell. Unfortunately, Seymour's escape from the Tower was delayed and he failed to rejoin her in time. Her friends took her to a boat and after some time they chartered a French vessel. She prevailed upon the captain to remain 'at anchor till Seymour's appearance. But fate was against them. He missed the Frenchman and landed at Ostend. In the meantime English ships had been sent after the fugitives. The unhappy girl was captured and brought to the Tower, which she never left till her death in 1615.

We may, if we choose, imagine William Seymour, Lady Arabella and their friends taking Shakspeare the actor into the privacy of their cares and entertaining him at length with their hopes, anxieties, favors and secrets in order to enrich his stage productions with the attraction of social scandal. But we are not forbidden to follow the directions of our experience of men in considering whether those whom these occurrences immediately concerned would feel inclined to keep them from the vulgar or to display them to their greedy curiosity and idle comments. On the other hand, in 1611 Roger Manners had long left the Court and was leading a retired life between Belvoir, Uffington and his chambers at Cambridge. Could the story of Lady Arabella have reached him in his voluntary retirement from London? On the 4th of January 1611 Thomas Screven wrote from London to Belvoir: "This day the Lady Arabella is called before the Lords at Westminster in the Courts of Wards Office, and I hear — as yet a great secret — that she shall be sent to Duresme, and there comytred and confyned to that Bishop's charge, with the intent that she and her husband shall not come together. What more may followe, your Lordship shall have yt as yt occureth." A few weeks later Screven again refers to the unfortunate lady: "On Thursday last in

the afternoon the Viscount of Fenton was sent to Lambeth to the Lady Arabella with direction to will her to prepare for her present journey to Duresme, which I thynke will be before the King's returne." These letters show that Rutland was not indifferent to the pitiful story. It is not impossible that the play was written with the hope that a performance at Court might appeal to the King's or the Queen's kinder feelings.

The Tempest, we are told, is Shakespeare's literary testament. Prospero is the poet at the end of his dramatic career. If William Shakspere of Stratford was Shakespeare, he must have been a great reader of books, and we should expect to find many a valuable volume in his possession. Prospero, his grand shadow, after having accomplished his mission in the world, retires to a life of contemplation. In his exile he regretted nothing but the loss of his books. He says of his friend Gonzalo:

of his gentleness,
Knowing I loved my books, he furnished me
From my own library with volumes that
I prize above my Dukedom.

Scheming against Prospero, Caliban cautions Stephano:

Remember
First to possess his books
Burn but his books;
He has brave utensils (for so he calls them),
Which, when he has a house, he'll deck withal.

"Every word," says an orthodox critic, "is meant, and meant for Shakespeare." A strange remark, since nobody ever saw Shakspere with a book in his hand; nobody ever

lent him a book or borrowed one from him: and not a booklet, not even a Bible, was mentioned in his carefully detailed will. He died with not a single volume under his roof.

Mr. J. Thomas Looney is the first writer who dared assert the poor literary quality of *The Tempest*. He points out such glaring defects in it as to make it absolutely impossible to attribute it to Shakespeare such as we have it: purely negative philosophy, muddled metaphysics, lack of genuine wit, coarse fun; a poor vocabulary; bad scansion with numberless offensive weak endings; the poorest possible presentation of character. When the lovers, Ferdinand and Miranda, happily united, are seen together, "they pour out their mutual feelings in a rapturous game of chess". *The Tempest* is a fairy play, and we know what Shakespeare could create in fairy land. Invention in this melodrama is as sterile as in *Love's Labour's Lost*, and the general impression is that the greater part of the dialogue was prepared for print by some poetaster working on the poet's very carelessly drawn sketch. It has been noted that some passages obviously drafted in verse are printed in prose and lines of prose crudely chopped into iambs. If it be asked, how can this manifestly inferior play be so fascinating not to critics alone, but also to philosophers, the reason is simple, though paradoxical. Its very metaphysical vagueness makes it easily adaptable to any interpretation, and every true or imaginary philosopher can construe it in the sense of his own vagueries. An empty egg-shell will hold anything. Let the reader compare the hackneyed "We are such stuff as dreams are made on..." with Calderon's *Life Is a Dream*, and the shallowness of *The Tempest* will be as obvious as the truly philosophic spirit of the Spanish play. Yet there are two genuinely Shakespearean

passages in the drama. One is the very first scene; a ship struggling against the fury of the sea:

Boatswain. Down with the topmast; yare; lower, lower; bring her to try with main-course; (*a cry within*) A plague upon this howling . . . What do you here? Shall we give o'er and drown? . . . Have you a mind to sink?

Seb. A pox o' your throat, you bawling blasphemous, incharitable dog!

Boats. Work you, then, . . . Lay her a-hold, a-hold; set her two courses: off to sea again, lay her off.

Enter Mariners, wet.

Mar. All lost! to prayers, to prayers! all lost!

This, of course, is the master's pen. The other Shakespearean passage is Stephano's song which we have quoted before: "The master, the swabber, the boatswain, and I. . ." Apart from this, there is little in the dialogue which we could confidently ascribe to Shakespeare. There is a passage however which deserves our attention. One of the bitterest and most painful experiences in Rutland's short career was Bacon's treachery to Essex, doubled by

Ingratitude, more strong than traitor's arms,

It seems impossible that the recollection of Bacon's murderous speeches at the trial should have faded out of Rutland's mind. How could it be, we wonder, that no allusions to Bacon's treachery should appear in the Plays? The more we weigh this little circumstance, the more perplexing we find it. It is not a missing link, but it seems a flaw in the otherwise perfect fabric of our story. Yet there is an answer to the question. One of the lords in attendance on Alonso, the King of Naples, in *The Tempest* is called Francisco. He speaks but twice throughout the drama. The first time, to describe

Prince Ferdinand struggling for life with the waves: "Sir, he may live; I saw him beat the surges under him. . ." The second time he utters but three words: "They vanished strangely." The words might easily have been given to either of the three other actors in the scene: Sebastian, Gonzalo or Adrian. The Duke Antonio will not believe Francisco:

Although this lord of weak remembrance,
Who shall be of as little memory
When he is earthed, hath here persuaded,
(For he's a spirit of persuasion, only
Professes to persuade) the King his son's alive

"There is no reason," wrote an English critic, "in the play why Antonio should prophesy oblivion to Francisco, nor any reason in the play why his memory should or should not outlive his life. The remark falls entirely outside the action and the characterization; it has a meaning for the author alone and it is his personal judgment upon the fame of Francis Bacon. It arises out of the word-play of *memory* in two senses, the train of thought being that a man whose own memory is short ought not to live in the memories of others." No man in England had a stronger reason for this verdict than Rutland.

The storm, the shipwreck, and the marvels of the Island are pictures of the voyage of Sir George Somers' adventures on board the *Sea-Venture*, driven to the Bermuda Isles in 1609. The romance between Ferdinand and Perdita is borrowed from a collection of Spanish tales of Antonio Eslava under the title "The First Part of the Winter Evenings", which was published in Madrid in 1609. The characters in this *novela* are Dardalus, king of Bulgaria, his

daughter Seraphina and his usurping brother Nicephorus, Emperor of Bysantium. Guided by our former experience of Shakespeare's customary practice, we ask, whence came the altered names in the play. The information is, as usual, supplied by an orthodox critic, Dr. Gregor Sarrazin. The names Alonso and Ferdinand in *The Tempest* are those of King Alonso of Naples and his son Ferdinand who succeeded him in 1495. Prospero is the name of Prospero Adorno, who was Doge or Duke not of Milan, as is Duke Prospero in the drama, but of Genoa, which belonged to the Duchy of Milan. Being defeated by the armies of the Duke of Milan, who supported his rebellious brother Antonio, Prospero Adorno only saved his life by throwing himself into the sea and swimming in full dress to a galley that lay in the port. In the play Prospero is deposed by his brother Antonio with the help of the King of Naples, and is thrown, with his infant daughter, into the angry waves.

So in Shakespeare's last drama, as in his earlier plays, we discover his good knowledge of long forgotten occurrences in distant foreign countries, which must have been totally unknown not only to Shakspeare of the Globe, but to much better informed persons in London. It is probable that the adventures of Duke Prospero Adorno became known to Rutland from some local Italian chronicle, in the same way as the story of the Spanish judge in Mantua and of the murder of Alfonso Gonzaga, which served him for the plot of *Measure for Measure* and the by-play in *Hamlet*. Whether he abandoned his work on *The Tempest* altogether or left it unfinished for some reason, we do not know. This drama, which was the last of the poet's works, is the first printed in the Folio of 1623, but we need not discuss this unusual arrangement. As shown by Mr. Denham-Parsons, it was part

of Bacon's contrivances for asserting his authorship of the First Folio.

The romantic drama of *Pericles, Prince of Tyre* was first published in quarto in 1609 under the name of William Shakespeare. It is generally admitted that a few scenes in the play were written by the poet. The absurd introduction of a mediaeval tournament in a story set in the first century of our era may be a reminiscence of a tournament held before James I in 1613. The knights appear on the stage with shields bearing their mottoes and impresas (emblems). We know that early in the same year Shakspeare and Richard Burbadge were commissioned by Francis Manners, the sixth Earl of Rutland, to prepare an impresa for him and were well paid for the order. This may be worthy of note as showing that Shakspeare enjoyed the patronage of the Rutlands even after the fifth Earl's death. But the simple occurrence is indeed somewhat puzzling from the standpoint of the orthodox tradition. "What are we to think?" wrote an English gentleman; "Do we not receive a sort of shock when we hear of Shakespeare, at the end of the most glorious intellectual career ever granted to mortal man, set down to work of this kind at the bidding of a capricious nobleman?"

We need not be shocked and what we have to think is as always — the truth: that the man who had to devise this *impresa* was not the man who wrote the great plays. It was not the author of *Macbeth* and of *Lear* who devised the *impresa* for Francis Manners, but the Johannes Factotum; the Jack of all trades, the actor of the Globe. Simplicity, the ancients said, is the stamp of truth.

CHAPTER XIV

The Case for William Shakspere

"...after all the careful scrutiny of clues and all the patient balancing of probabilities, the last word for a self-respecting scholarship can only be that of nescience."

— *Sir Edmund Chambers*

The Tradition — The official documents on William Shakspere — Contemporary allusions to Shakspere as a playwright — Ben Jonson's testimony — Peculiar character of orthodox writings — Orthodox argumentation — Rhetorical devices — Contradictions and absurdities — Some questions to orthodox writers.

THE evidence for Roger Manners as the true author of Shakespeare's dramas is much stronger than what is usually required in principles of historical research or in matters of human conduct. Historical inferences, appreciations, and conclusions are universally accepted; divorces granted; children disinherited; men sentenced to life imprisonment and to the rope or the chair on much lighter circumstantial matter. In plain logic, the identity of the poet Shakespeare and Roger Manners appears to us as a moral certainty which, men of science tell us, is equivalent to mathematical certainty. Yet we are assured in hundreds and thousands of books that it is not so; that authentic records establish with irrefragable

certitude that the poet was William Shakspere of Stratford on Avon; and that hundreds of answers may be made to any theory to the contrary. We would not ignore this objection. We are for the truth. If the evidence for Shakspere is stronger, let truth prevail; if the evidence for Roger Manners is stronger, let truth conquer.

There are four classes of evidence for Shakspere: (a) the tradition; (b) the official documents; (c) the books published under the name of William Shakespeare; and (d) the contemporary allusions in other books and in private writings. We will examine all these.

A. The tradition is an exceptional one in history. It has lived not in old ages of ignorance and superstition, but through times of all-invading and all-penetrating scientific progress. In our days of scepticism, disbelief and cynicism it is still the inborn part of the heart and mind of the country which gave birth to Shakespeare. For two hundred and fifty years it stood unchallenged. In later decades the efforts of disinterested, laborious, and learned writers have been but paper bullets against it. Not only do millions of half-educated men all over the world believe in it as they believe in the latest discoveries of science — without questioning and understanding them; but thousands of scholars of renowned authority avouch and profess it not as a tradition, but as an historically attested and established truth. Such a tradition constitutes, undoubtedly, a powerful presumption against any heresy and all heresies. But the very word *tradition* indicates that the belief rests not on historical evidence. It may stand, so long as it is not disproved nor challenged, but can never become history. As our object is not apparent, but real truth, we must test and weigh the real evidence of the case.

B. Apart of the parish records of births, marriages and

deaths, there are in Stratford on Avon eight official records about William Shakspeare or Shaxpere. Among these records are three law suits for recovery of monies lent: against John Clayton for 7*l.*, against Philip Rogers for 1*l.* 15*s.* 10*d.*; against John Addenbroke for 6*l.*; against Thomas Horneby as bail for Addenbroke, the defendant being eventually imprisoned for the debtor's default of payment. In London, in different places, ten more official documents are preserved, containing references to William Shakspeare and including the grant of arms to the actor's father and Shakspeare's will. There are no allusions of any kind to the actor as a poet in all these records.

C. There are no allusions and no hints about an actor-poet in *Venus and Adonis*, in *Lucrece* and in the Quartos of the plays. Nor is there a single allusion to the poet as an actor in the hundred and fifty-four Sonnets. But there are a few lines in the prefatory matter of the First Folio, plainly attributing the plays to William Shakspeare the actor. This we must examine carefully.

1. The Droeshout engraving in the First Folio, generally accepted as the poet's portrait, is accompanied by ten lines of verse, signed B. I. These lines inform the reader that the artist has either presented the poet's face, or concealed it (in Elizabethan writings, the word *hid* was sometimes spelt *hit*) and invite him to look "not on his picture, but his book". Why should the picture be there, if we are not to look at it? If our reader will compare this picture with that of the Earl of Essex in a previous chapter, he will see the reason. Essex's portrait is that of a handsome man, clad in coat and doublet, with powerful chest and shoulders and the well-known square-cut beard of the fashion, — a real man. The engraving is a ridiculous, absurd dummy with two left arms,

To the Reader.

This Figure, that thou here seest put,
It was for gentle Shakespeare cut;
Wherein the Grauer had a strife
with Nature, to out-doo the life:
O, could he but haue drawne his wit
As well in brasse, as he hath hit
His face; the Print would then surpasse
All, that was euer writ in brasse.
But, since he cannot, Reader, looke
Not on his Picture, but his Booke.

B. I.

Lines accompanying the masked Figure of the First Folio (page 235 of this volume). The word *his*, preceding the word *Book*, is the 67th from the first word of the verses, 67 being the numerical equivalent of *Francis*. In the indented lines, the same word *his* is the 33rd, the equivalent of *Bacon*. This is one of the strongest pieces of evidence that the First Folio was printed under Bacon's directions and control.

The text is: This Figure, that thou here seest put, It was for gentle Shakespeare cut, VVherein the Grauer had a strife vvith Nature, to opt-doo the life: O, could he but haue drawn his vvit As well in brasse, as he hath hit His face, the Print vvould then surpasse All, that vvas euer vvrit in brasse. But, since he cannot, Reader, looke Not on his Picture, but his Booke. B. I.



THE MASKED FIGURE OF THE FIRST FOLIO

The body presents a vertical plane; the large head is out of proportion with the narrow shoulders; one part of the doublet is the front, the other part, the back.

PART OF PAGE 156 OF THE FIRST FOLIO
containing part of the dialogue of Act III, sc. 2 of *A Mid-summer Night's Dream*. The stage directions in italics show that the text was printed not after Shakespeare's manuscript, but after a theatre prompt book.

Enter Demetrius.

Dem. *Lysander*, speake againe ;
Thou runaway, thou coward, art thou fled?
Speake in some bush: Where dost thou hide thy head?

Rob. Thou coward, art thou bragging to the stars,
Telling the bushes that thou look'st for wars,
And wilt not come? Come recreant, come thou childe,
Ile whip thee with a rod. He is defild
That drawes a sword on thee

Dem. Yea, art thou there?

Ro. Follow my voice, we'l try no manhood here. *Exit.*

Lys. He goes before me, and still dares me on,
When I come where he calls, then he is gone.
The villaine is much lighter heeld then I :
I followed fast, but faster he did flye ; *Forfing places.*
That fallen am i in darke vneuen way,
And here wil rest me Come thou gentle day : *lye down.*
For if but once thou shew me thy gray light,
Ile finde *Demetrius*, and reuenge this light.

Enter Robin and Demetrius.

Rob. Ho, ho, ho ; coward, why com'st thou not?

Dem. Abide me, if thou dar'st. For well I wot,
Thou runst before me, shifting every place,
And dar'st not stand, nor looke me in the face.
Where art thou?

Rob. Come hither, I am here.

Dem. Nay then thou mock'st me ; thou shalt buy this
deere,
If euer I thy face by day-light see.
Now goe thy way : faintnesse constraineth me,
To measure out my length on this cold bed,
By daies approach looke to be vitited.

Enter Helena.

Hel. O weary night, O long and tedious night,
Abate thy houres, shine comforts from the East,
That I may backe to *Athen* by day-light,
From these that my poore companie detest ;
And sleepe that sometime shuts vp sorrowes eie,
Steale me a while from mine owne companie. *Sleepe.*

one half of the doublet designed as the front, the other half as the back; the head is much too large for the body and too high above the shoulders; the face is covered with a mask and the chest as flat as that of a knave of hearts or diamonds. Long ago London master-tailors, the best authority in the matter, have discovered and exposed the obvious hoax. A child can see it.

2. The Dedication of the Folio to the Earls of Pembroke and Montgomery contains unequivocal assertions of the identity of the actor, William Shakspere (under the name of William Shakespeare) with the author of the thirty-six plays printed in the volume. This Dedication is written in the name of two fellow-actors of Shakspere. The text is: "We have but collected them [the plays], and done an office to the dead, to procure his Orphanes, Guardians; without ambition either of self profit, or fame: onely to keepe the memory of so worthy a Friend, & Fellow aliue, as was our Shakespeare, by humble offer of his playes, to your most notable patronage." Whether these lines were indeed written by the two actors, Heminge and Condell, or, as is believed by most orthodox writers, by Ben Jonson, is immaterial. The essential point is that the statement is not true. It is inconceivable that these two actors should have assumed the heavy expenses of the Folio out of purely sentimental motives, not only without profit, but with a certainty of heavy losses. It took nine years to sell out the book. Besides, the assertion in the Dedication is contradicted by numberless ciphered statements in the prefatory matter and in the text of the dramas, obviously suggesting Bacon as the author of the plays.

3. The Address to the great Variety of Readers affirms that the author's writings were offered them *cur'd*, *perfect of their limps and absolute in their numbers* as he

conceived them and as they, the publishers, had received them from him with scarce a blot in his papers. This is another lie. Some of the plays were printed after stage prompt-books with stage directions mixed with the text, and others — after scripts, partly illegible and partly mutilated into perfect absurdities.

The misleading assertions in the Dedication and the Address are but a logical development of the hoax of the masked Figure in the Folio.

4. Ben Jonson's lengthy poem "To the memory of my beloved, the Author, William Shakespeare", contains two lines which, if taken literally, apply to the actor:

to hear thy buskin tread
And shake a stage; or, when thy socks were on,
Leave thee alone for the comparison
Of all that insolent Greece or haughty Rome
Sent forth. . . .

Buskin means cothurnus and socks are actors' soft shoes. But orthodox writers inform us that *buskin* here stands for *tragedy* and *socks* for *comedy*, which gives to the lines a perplexing double meaning. The invocation

Sweet Swan of Avon. . . .

is not more explicit, since there are, apart of the Warwickshire Avon, five other rivers of the same name in England.

5. Ben Jonson's poem is followed by three short poems by Hugh Holland, Leonard Digges and an unknown rhymers, *I.M.* In the text of two of these poems the name of the author is spelt *Shake-speare*. One of them contains the words: "When that stone is rent, and Time dissolves thy

Stratford monument. . . .” — a plain allusion to Shakspeare. But the Latin epitaph under the bust in the church at Stratford upon Avon informs the visitor that “The earth covers, the nation mourns, and Heaven has received a Nestor in judgment, a Socrates in genius, and a Virgil in poetic art”, which implies that Shakspeare was a man of very great mind indeed; but did not write plays. We turn to another sketch by Ben Jonson’s pen:

Poor Poet-Ape, that would be thought our chief,
Whose works are e’en the frippery of wit,
From brokage is become so bold a thief,
As we, the robbed, leave rage and pity it.
As first he made low shifts, would pick and glean,
Buy the reversion of old plays; now grown
To a little wealth, and credit in the scene,
He takes up all, makes each man’s wit his own,
And told of this, he slights it. Tut, such crimes,
The sluggish gaping auditor devours,
He marks not whose ’twas first: and after times
May judge it to be his as well as ours.
Fool! as if half eyes would not know a fleece
From locks of wool, or shreds from the whole
piece?

How much can the historian finally infer from Ben Jonson’s remarks? In the Folio poem, after saying that Shakespeare had “small Latin and less Greek”, he compared him with “all that insolent Greece and haughtie Rome” has produced in poetry and in drama. In the same poem, he admired the poet’s “well-toned and true-filed lines”; to their fellow-actors he complained that he had not blotted a thou-

sand of them. In the Folio, he commended Shakespeare's Art giving fashion to Nature; in a conversation with Drummond of Hawthornden he said that the poet "wanted Arte and sometimes sense". In the Folio he calls to him: "Soul'of the Age! The applause! delight! and wonder of our stage!" and in an Epigram he sneers: "Poor Poet-Ape, whose works are the frippery of wit..." In one passage he calls Shakspeare honest, in another — a thief. To ordinary English-speaking persons these utterings and writings are perplexing contradictions; to Stratfordian critics — monumental, irrefragable proof. We would not hang a dog on such evidence.

D. Outside of the First Folio, contemporary allusions to "Shakespeare" or "Shake-speare" have been found in writings of some twenty Elizabethans. They are: Rob. Greene, Drayton, Covell, Meres, Barnfield, Harvey, Weaver, Ben Jonson, Rodenham, Davies, Scholoker, Camden, Barkstead, Webster, Heywood, Freeman, Drummond, Howes, Porter, Bolton, Basse and Taylor. With the exception of Greene and Ben Jonson, all these writers speak exclusively of the poet, not of the actor.

We must note the well known passage in Robert Greene's *Groatworth of Wit*: "...there is an upstart crow, beautified with our feathers, that with his *Tiger's heart wrapped in a player's hide* supposes he is as well able to bombast out a blank verse as the best of you; and being an absolute *Johannes factotum*, is in his own conceit the only Shake-scene in a country." Greene does not name the clown whom he ridicules in these lines. His pamphlet was published in 1592 and he died shortly before in the same year. By that time, only one of the plays had been performed in London — *The First Part of King Henry VI*, in which only one or two scenes, inserted some years later, are attributed to

Shakespeare. Greene could not envy or hate Shakespeare for dramas which Shakespeare had not yet written.

It is a fact of common knowledge that in a discussion the man who is sure of his point is self-possessed and courteous; the man who is losing ground generally loses his temper. There is nothing unusual to be noticed in this respect in the writings of the sceptics. *Absurd, repulsive, crazy, madhouse chatter, epidemic disease, morbid physiology, impudent fiction, utter stupidity*, and the like are the idiomatic peculiarities of orthodox writers when speaking of those who happen not to agree with them. Why is that so? Have we not been told that foul words is but foul wind? Another remarkable feature of Stratfordian books is the lofty superiority and cool detachment with which the orthodox Shakespeareans are wont to dispose of their adversaries' endeavours to put the question of the poet's identity to a logical test. It is but fair to say that these idiosyncrasies are not limited to critics in the United Kingdom. In his long and laborious book on Shakespeare George Brandes writes: "It is well known that in recent days a troop of less than half-educated people put forth the doctrine that Shakespeare lent his name to a body of poetry with which he had really nothing to do. Literary criticism is an instrument which, like all delicate tools, must be handled carefully and only by those who have a vocation for it. Here it has fallen into the hands of raw Americans and fanatical women . . . We have here another proof, if any were needed, that the judgment of the multitude, in questions of art, is a negligible quantity." Lord Palmerston, Lord Beaconsfield, Charles Dickens, Lord Penzance, Sir Durning Lawrence, Sir George Greenwood, Sir Edward Clarke, Prof. Gilbert Slater, Mr. J. Denham Parsons are neither women nor Americans. It is

also extremely doubtful that anybody, even critics by vocation, would range them within the herd of half-educated men. The delicate tool does not seem to have been very carefully handled in this instance. Besides, "the judgment of the multitude being a negligible quantity" and the multitude holding that the poet was Shakspeare of Stratford, it would appear that this time the tool has slipped out of the vocation critic's hands altogether.

Those who are on the right side of a controversy must, naturally, have the better arguments against their opponents. Why should our Stratfordians be so unlucky in theirs?

Orthodox writers have written excellent books on Shakespeare, and we have often quoted them as the ground or the support of our conclusions. But, strange to say, when these learned and scholarly writers approach the question of the poet's identity, we often find scant information and poor logic in their pages. Whether this is due to ignorance or to poor memory or even to a convenient lack of memory, we cannot tell. In some cases, we are bound to say it, it is a wilful *suppressio veri*. It is not too much to say that the arguments of these scholars may serve as examples for a treatise on logical fallacies.

The weakest and the most frequent error in our thinking, speaking and writing is the *petitio principii* — assuming as certain what has to be proved. Practically all orthodox biographies of Shakespeare are based upon this fallacy; they assume that Shakspeare of Stratford was Shakespeare, the author of the plays of the First Folio, and proceed throughout their pages on this groundless assumption. We have given some instances of this erroneous reasoning in our first chapter. We may add one or two more. In his elaborate treatise on Shakespeare's learning Churton Collins asserted

a valuable historical truth. "There are," he wrote, "certain traditions which the world appears to have made up its mind to accept without inquiry... A very striking illustration of this is the tradition that Shakespeare's knowledge of Greek and Latin was confined to English translations." The critic then brings forward perfectly conclusive facts to show that the poet read both Greek and Latin in the original. But in his introductory remarks he unconsciously furnishes us with another not less remarkable illustration of his fundamental proposition: "It may be perfectly well assumed," he says, "*though we have no proof*, that Shakespeare received his education at the Stratford-on-Avon grammar school". — A self-confessed *petitio principii*: with the rest of the world the writer "has made up his mind to accept a tradition without enquiry".

We find a curious instance of self-complacent rationalization in a page of Andrew Lang's on the "Poet-ape" epigram. The critic wrote: "Ben [Jonson] thinks Shakespeare's 'works' very larcenous, but still, the 'works', as such, are those of the poet-actor. I hope it is now clear that Poet-Ape... can be nobody but Shakespeare. Hence it follows that the 'works' of Poet-Ape are the ~~w~~orks of Shakespeare." The sophism is a *petitio principii* based upon a *substitutio termini*. The argument assumes that there is no question about the identity of the poet Shakespeare with the actor Shakspeare. But neither the word actor nor the name Shakespeare are used by Ben Jonson. The epigram only asserts that there was a poet who was a broker and a thief. There is nothing to connect this poet's works with the works of Shakespeare. The critic substituted the name Shakespeare for the word "poet". It is indeed as good as certain that the epigram was directed against Shakspeare the actor and, the

proper terms being introduced in their places, the argument is: "Ben Jonson thinks the works of the actor very larcenous, but still his own works; it is clear that Poet-Ape can be nobody but the actor: therefore, the works of Poet-Ape are the works of the actor." This is a perfectly sound syllogism, but it does not prove that the actor Shakspeare was Shakespeare the poet, nor that the works of Poet-Ape were *Richard III*, *Twelfth Night* and *Hamlet*. Reduced to a simple form, the argument is: the Poet-Ape Shakspeare wrote larcenous plays; therefore he wrote the great plays.

Our foremost scholars are not immune from similar fallacies. Referring to Shakespeare's imagery from the sea, Dr. Caroline Spurgeon writes: "the subjects which chiefly interest him are those which might be noted by any landsman: storm and wrecks and rocky shores, the boundless and fathomless depth of the ocean, the ebb and flow of the tide... My own impression, after carefully studying all his sea images, is that he had little, if any, direct experience on the sea and that his knowledge of the sea and ships might well have been gained from books, from talk and from living in a great seaport." The texts, which show that the poet was in a storm on sea more than once, are interpreted as evidence that he may have never been on sea. Can the reader see the trick? It is presented with such good faith, that, without doubt, the writer herself was deceived by her unconscious equivocation. The implied syllogism is: The sea can be described either from boardship or from the land; Shakespeare described it as seen from the land; therefore Shakespeare was a landsman and may never have stepped on a ship. The fallacy is a *substitutio termini*. The words *any landsman* are slipped in instead of *any man living on the sea coast*. As far as we know and should sur-

mise, William Shakspeare never lived in a seaport, never walked over sea weeds, or picked up a sea-horse or a sea star, or noted the fathomless depth of the ocean. He never saw a spoonful of salt water.

Another frequent error in human speculation is the *non sequitur* — a conclusion which is not logically warranted by the propositions from which it is drawn.

Delia Bacon, the first real champion of philosophic Shakesperean research, lost her mind sometime before she died. It is hard to believe, but it is true that orthodox writers bring forth this sad occurrence as an argument against her theory of a joint authorship of the dramas. The Stratfordians forget Tasso, Dean Swift and Maupassant. They even forget Alexander the Great. The implied syllogism is: Delia Bacon asserted that Shakspeare was not Shakespeare; Delia Bacon lost her mind; therefore what she said cannot be true.

It is asserted in every orthodox biography that Shakspeare was a friend of the Earl of Southampton. The name of the Earl appears in connection with that of the actor in three instances: (a) *Venus and Adonis*, the first poem, was dedicated to Southampton; (b) *Lucrece*, the second poem, was also dedicated to Southampton; (c) Nicholas Ward reports that on one occasion Southampton gave Shakspeare a thousand pounds. What is the logical inference from these occurrences? To liegemen of Stratford, as represented by the poet's official biographer, Sir Sidney Lee, "it is abundantly clear that Shakespeare enjoyed very friendly relations with Southampton", and "his close intimacy with the Earl is attested under his own hand in the dedicatory epistles".

We have in these lines five logical fallacies. The first is, ignoring the rule *ex mere particularibus nihil sequitur* — nothing can be deduced from barely particular propositions.

The two dedications and the gift do not show that there was any kind of personal relation between the two men besides these three facts: they may have never met before, and they may have become enemies immediately after. The second fallacy is a *petitio principii*: it is assumed that Shakspeare, the receiver of Southampton's bounty, is the same man as Shakespeare, the author of the two poems — an unwarranted and a disputed assertion. The other three fallacies are *substitutiones termini*. The argument should be this: The dedication of a man's work to another man is a mark of respect; the author of the two poems dedicated them to Southampton; therefore, Southampton was respected by the author. The false reasoning is: The dedication of a poem to another man is a mark of respect; Shakspeare, — first *substitutio termini*: *Shakspeare* for *the author* — dedicated two poems to the Earl of Southampton; therefore Shakspeare and Southampton were on terms of close intimacy — second *substitutio termini*: *close intimacy* for *respect*. The third *substitutio termini* lies in the words "under his own hand" — the term *handwriting* is substituted for the term *printed matter*. The truth is that there is absolutely nothing to prove that Southampton was a friend of the actor and later the gentleman William Shakspeare, — as common sense should have told our Stratfordians long ago.

Andrew Lang wrote "If Davies [a contemporary poet] was in the Great Secret, a world of others must have shared the Secret de Polichinelle." This, in pure logic, is as much as to say: "If Athos or Porthos knew who was the Iron Mask, a world of others must have known it, too!" The term "*secret de polichinelle*", which means a matter of common knowledge, is substituted for the term *secret*, which means a matter of very limited, exclusive knowledge. The

capital letters are supposed to be helpful in dazing our poor intelligence — the Sandman of our nursery. *Non sequitur*. An inference from a single instance to a general proposition is not valid. Elijah was taken to Heaven alive; it does not follow that all Israelites were taken alive to Heaven.

Orthodox writers denounce their opponents with "prodigious ignorance of the very rudiments of the literature with which they are concerned". They adduce no examples of such ignorance. But it may be noted that orthodox critics are not always exempt from this regrettable inferiority. In order to show that the poet's familiarity with aristocratic life is no argument against Shakspeare, J. M. Robertson refers to the fact that the plays of Molière "show much knowledge of aristocratic life and much culture". The learned critic forgets or never heard that Molière was a Bachelor of Arts of the Lycée de Clermont, one of the greatest *Collèges* in France; later *valet de chambre ordinaire et tapissier du Roi*, groom of the Royal Chamber, not in name only, but in fact, and that, as such, he lived in the Louvre and at Versailles under the same roof with Louis XIV, in constant contact with the King, the princes, the courtiers and the court poets. Not to know that is indeed prodigious innocence.

A modern Englishman writes in indignant protest against heretic theories: "In truth, it makes too large a demand on our credulity to ask us to believe that when Ben Jonson prefixed to the First Folio a poem 'To the memory of my beloved, the Author, Mr. William Shakespeare, and what he hath left us,' he was ignorant or insincere. 'Soul of the Ages! The applause! delight! the wonder of our stage!' — were these words addressed to a phantom or a swindler?... Nor is it easy to dismiss from the case the evidence of Gabriel Harvey. 'The younger sort', wrote that scholar,

'take much delight in *Venus and Adonis*; but his *Lucrece* and his tragedy of *Hamlet*, Prince of Denmark, have it in them to please the wiser sort.' Was Gabriel Harvey also an accomplice or was he in the dark?" We may read and reread these two passages a thousand times, we shall not find the slightest suggestion that the poet was an actor from Stratford. Exclamation and interrogation points are neither evidence nor arguments. The poem was not addressed to a phantom nor to a swindler nor to an actor: it was addressed to the real Shakespeare, but it does not say that Shakespeare was an actor. As another instance, we may place before the reader a few lines from a review of a heretic book on the Earl of Derby. The reviewer is, again, the Rt. Hon. J. M. Robertson. The rhetorical devices, *gradatio* and *amplificatio*. The learned critic begins by pointing out that "a hundred scholars, critics, and poets, from Jonson and Milton to Tennyson and Arnold, had no difficulty" in reconciling the life of Shakspeare with the story of the plays. He further states that *millions* of men will maintain negatives to the assertion that Shakspeare could not have written the plays, and finally that the heretic theory under discussion is "in flat opposition to the belief of *myriads* of scholars". We call Falstaff a liar because of "O monstrous! eleven buckram men grown out of two!" But with millions and myriads of scholars grown out of a hundred, Falstaff is the babe unborn to the Rt. Hon. J. M. Robertson.

In public debates and in books written for the man in the street one of the best means of covering defeat is the *argumentum ad auditores*. In our controversy such arguments are addressed either to social or to national prejudice. The first is the argument from democracy; the second, the argu-

ment from patriotism. Such artifices often serve to disguise the shift from the real to an imaginary point of dispute.

It is undemocratic, assert orthodox writers, to believe that the plays could not have been written by a commoner, and it is a caste prejudice to assert that they must have been written by a lord. But the truth or untruth of a historical fact does not depend on its political color. Epictetus's writings would be as good if they had been written by a Julius or a Cornelius. The sophism in the argument is a *mutatio controversiae*: the question of the poet's social rank is substituted for the question of his identity. The argument from patriotism appears in a vehement attack on Carl Bleibtreu's Essays on Rutland. A patriotic Britisher denounced the author as a German chauvinist who, "from sheer Anglo-phobia, casts a poisoned arrow at England's honor". The logical construction of the argument is as follows: England's honor demands that the author of the so-called Shakespeare plays should be an English actor; Carl Bleibtreu asserts that the author was an English lord; therefore Bleibtreu insults England. With equal logic it may be said that an Englishman who calls England Britain is shooting an envenomed dart at England's national dignity.

With such facts and such logic before us, can we blame Sir Edmund Chambers for asserting that our knowledge about William Shakespeare the actor-playwright is nescience, that is, ignorance, or Dr. G. L. Kittredge for bewailing the blindness and perversity of our criticisms?

Prof. Dowden, in his admirable treatment of the development of the poet's dramatic work, divides it in four periods, as indeed other orthodox writers have done before. He calls these four periods "In the Workshop", "In the World", "Out of the Depths", and "On the Heights".

These progressive steps in the poet's mind are, in fact, indicated by his works. But we never catch and are never shown a glimpse of William Shakspere "in his workshop" — that is while writing one of his early compositions; or "in the world", except in the most prosaic world of petty business; or, "in the depths" — in distress and gloom; or "on the heights", — in sublime serenity of mind. We see the colorless life of an ordinary man.

To give the actor's case its full weight, we must add the basic element of genius to the story of the man. Then, indeed, the case becomes extraordinary. But at the same time it becomes unnatural. Dante, Beethoven, Napoleon, Goethe, Tolstoy are expressed in their works. Shakspere of Stratford is not — not in Shakespeare's dramas. This is something which never happened before to a man of genius. Turning to Rutland, we do not find his life an extraordinary one: many men of his time lived through similar adventures and experiences. What is indeed exceptional is that the plays of the First Folio correspond entirely and exclusively to the experiences and adventures of that one man. And when we add genius and the transcendent heaven-born power of poetical conception and expression, what seemed extraordinary appears to be only natural: the works of a genius are the record of his life.

In the Introduction to this book and in other pages, orthodox Shakespeareans are invited to demonstrate the truth of the tradition of Stratford by answering a few simple questions better than they are answered under the assumption of Rutland's authorship. We now respectfully repeat the invitation, or challenge, in the cause of truth, as a sure and simple way of settling the case. To narrow the issue, we shall add a few more questions, with our answers to them.

If orthodox critics have better answers, victory is theirs. The answers, as ours, must of course be facts; probabilities and possibilities are not evidence. All these questions are based upon the best orthodox authorities.

1. Why are orthodox writers in constant contradiction among themselves? — Because they confuse two different persons, the poet and the actor.

2. Why does Sir Edmund Chambers assert that the last word of self-respecting scholarship in Shakesperean research can only be nescience, that is, ignorance? — Because such is the truth.

3. Why does Prof. Kittredge assert that three quarters of our Shakespearean criticisms are blind or naively perverse? — Because it is so.

4. Why does Dr. Caroline Spurgeon assert that there are in Shakespeare's plays fewer images from the drama than from the law, the sea, the war, the field sports and classical mythology? — Because it is true.

5. Why are there less images from the stage than from other activities of mankind? — Because the poet was not an actor.

6. Why was *flight*, as shown by Dr. Spurgeon's figures, the special aspect of birds' life which attracted the poet? — Because hawking was his favorite sport.

7. Why are the plays saturated with law? — Because Shakespeare studied law at Cambridge, Padua and Gray's Inn.

There are vivid pictures of war on land in Shakespeare's *Histories*, in the three Roman tragedies, in *All's Well that Ends Well*, and in *Cymbeline*; and fights at sea, storms and shipwrecks in nine dramas out of thirty-six: *The Comedy of Errors*, *Twelfth Night*, *Richard III*, *Hamlet*,

Anthony and Cleopatra, Othello, The Winter's Tale, The Tempest and *Pericles*. Shakespeare knew the smell of gunpowder and the taste of salt water. As a contrast to this, there is but one drama with sea scenes among Lope de Vega's hundreds of heroic *Comedias*, one in which ships and sea could hardly have been avoided, i.e., *El Nuevo Mundo descubierta por Cristobal Colon*. This suggests another question:

8. How often has Shakespeare been on board ship in a storm? The answer is — many times. In June 1597 in Plymouth harbor and on the high seas off the east coast of England; in August of the same year, again off Plymouth and on the high seas in the Bay of Biscay; in September of the same year, off the Island of Tercera in the Azores; in April 1599, off the east coast of Ireland; and in 1603, fourteen days on the high seas between Elsinore in Denmark and the English coast off Scarborough and Gravesend.

9. Why is Shakespeare the only poet who wrote not a line on Queen Elizabeth's death? — Because he and his friends had suffered cruelly at her hands.

10. Why was William Shakspeare's death unnoticed and unsung by other poets? — Because he was not a poet.

The more naive these questions, the simpler must be the answers. But to serve the truth, they must be earnest and straightforward. The plain question, Why did Shakespeare write no more after 1612? was answered by a lecturer of an English University in a typically Stratfordian manner: "Not, I am sure," wrote the patented equivocator, "because Manners [the Earl of Rutland] died that year." A cheap joke is the common answer of a cornered man. But it is also a confession of intellectual turpitude. Real scholars will not debase their pen with such inanities.

Yet if orthodox Shakespeareans will hold to their creed, they have also to solve a problem emerging from their own ink-horn. They have to explain the fact that the actor Shakspeare, through twenty years of professional and other activities, wrote over thirty dramatic masterpieces so as to make them record and illustrate not his own life, but the life of another man, well remote from him in social standing, occupations and personal experiences. In other words, they have to dovetail a chessboard into a lozenge pattern, or to show that a donkey can bray in harmony with a master's violin. The readers will judge how far this is possible, probable,

Chapter XV.

Bacon and Oxford

"It is truth we want, and nothing else will satisfy us "

—Mrs Eva Turner Clark

Ciphers in the First Folio inserted under Bacon's directions — The text of the Folio both very carefully arranged and most carelessly printed — Exceptionally correct text of one play — An unpleasant inference from facts — The Oxford theory as presented by Mr J. Thomas Looney and other writers — Contemporary references to Oxford as lyrical poet and comedy writer — The grant of £1000 — Shakespeare's plays ill adapted for patriotic propaganda — War with Spain not reflected in the First Folio — Oxford as playwright.

WE NEED not discuss the Baconian theory at length. The reader who wishes to be fully informed on the marvellous cryptograms of the First Folio, the Quartos and the lines under the actor's bust in the church of Stratford on Avon must study not only Sir Edwin Durning-Lawrence's book, but also the unassailable recent discoveries of J Denham-Parsons, authenticated by the highest English authorities on the calculus of probabilities. Supported by these ciphered statements, the Bacon theory appears to be absolutely true as to *Venus and Adonis*, *Lucrece*, and *Love's Labour's Lost*. But as to Shakespeare's works as a whole, it can only bring the scrupulous historian to the unsatisfactory inferences: this is

more probable than that, but we still do not know who was Shakespeare. Not this, nor any other heresy offers a logically irrefutable and therefore final set of arguments. It is not so in the case analysed in these pages. Unless bent upon ignoring facts and mocking logic, we must accept the evidence converging on one man to the exclusion of others. A few particular facts connected with Bacon's cryptograms should however, not be left without explanation.

The First Folio of Shakespeare's Comedies, Histories and Tragedies was published thirteen years after Rutland's death and four years after the death of William Shakspeare. Much work was required for preparing, setting and printing the book. No indications have until now been discovered as to who had provided the necessary funds; who made the selection of the thirty-six plays; and who approved their text. One thing is certain: the Folio was printed under the directions of Francis Bacon. It contains many various allusions to his name, sometimes as a pun on the word *bacon* spelt with a capital letter, sometimes in very complicated cryptograms, sometimes in extremely simple ciphers, such as we have found as signatures of the two poems. It rests with us to decide whether these ciphered indications are true, but it would be unfair not only to Bacon, but to history to keep the reader in ignorance of them.

The first question is, If Bacon was the author, why should he have concealed the fact at the time of publication of the Folio? Already he had long ago been buried in Westminster Abbey with the old Queen's mortal remains. His own career was irretrievably ruined and could not be injured any more by the confession of a weakness to write beautiful plays. We can see no reasons for him to make a secret of it. But if he was not the only Shakespeare, then, obviously, it

was our ~~one~~ question to give his name on the title page of the book. He would have been exposed by the real author or his friends and relatives. The other question arises in connection with the text of the First Folio. This is a technical and, perhaps, a tedious matter, but it cannot be ignored: we want the truth. The extremely complicated printing contrivances of the volume are undisputable, absolute proof that Bacon had personally directed the compositor's and the printer's work with minute, meticulous attention; and this leads us to a puzzling question. For, at the same time, we find in the First Folio many grammar mistakes, many meaningless words and phrases, and endless absurd misprints, which can only be explained by complete indifference to the integrity of the poet's pages and lines — nicest care and unpardonable negligence. Would orthodox writers explain that? And this puzzle is accompanied by another one. Thirty-five dramas are veritable Augian stables of printed matter; one is admired for correct printing of the text. Could ~~that~~ ~~lovers~~ explain this? The reader will name the exception: it is *Love's Labour's Lost*. And this solves both riddles. The book was printed under Bacon's instructions; *Love's Labour's Lost* was his work: he corrected it himself. The other plays were another man's, — why should he? We take care of our own boys and girls, but show merely conventional solicitude of other people's children.

From the standpoint of Rutland's authorship, the cryptograms of the Folio are simply ~~easy~~ ~~and~~. The plays previously printed in quarto were kept at Belvoir Castle for reading, revising, and for future edition. The unpublished plays were copied and made ready for print. Some time after Roger Manners's death, the Quartos and the manuscripts were handed over to Bacon by the Fifth Earl. This may have

been done at the request of the brothers Pembroke and Montgomery in compliance with some suggestion made to them by Rutland himself or by his widow, or otherwise. In any case, the manuscripts were in Bacon's hands, and it is probable, that the Manners took no further interest in them as they were not to be published under their name. In this way Bacon became the absolute master of the Folio. It is not impossible that after his disgrace, at enforced leisure, he revised Rutland's writings; perhaps worked on them not a little, and this may have excused in his own complacent judgment, — not in ours — his appropriation of the whole book. The ciphers in the Folio are of marvelous ingenuity and variety. No man but Bacon himself would have devised them, because no man but he had any interest in giving his name to the works. This being so, two otherwise puzzling circumstances find their simple explanation. If Bacon meant to appropriate the poet's glory, then, first, no ciphers indicating Rutland can be expected in the Folio; and secondly, the manuscripts had to be destroyed or carefully concealed, as proof positive of another man's authorship. The contradiction in facts cannot be too strongly emphasized here. The First Folio says *Bacon* in one language and *Rutland* in another. But the conscious assertion of a man may be untrue; the unconscious testimony of the plays can not. The dramas present the record not of Bacon's, but of Rutland's life. This brings us to a cruel enigma. Bacon's ciphered messages offer not the slightest hint of joint authorship. He claimed all the thirty-six plays of the Folio as his own. The inevitable conclusion is that he betrayed a dead friend as he had before betrayed, face to face, a man who had been not his friend only, but his patron and benefactor.

What perverse ambition could have incited him to

covet the fraudulent posthumous fame? He would be dead, perhaps long dead, before his messages could be discovered by some idle cryptogram hunter. Besides, what could be to him the spurious luster of a score of dramatic compositions along with the legitimate glory of his philosophic works? And it was no harmless fraud: a dead man was robbed of immortality. Can we explain this? Certainly not on the ordinary lines of human motives and conduct. But the fact is there. We can only say with a sigh that the greed for even a distant fame must have darkened the philosopher's mind and poisoned his conscience. It is an unpleasant suggestion. But we are not writing a novel nor anything like the modern 'facts and fancy' pretty biographies. Our purpose is neither romance, nor revelation, nor hero worship. It is truth and justice. An English writer called Bacon "the wisest and meanest of mankind"; another remarked that "one of this great man's favorite devices was the *suppressio veri* combined with the *suggestio falsi*" — the suppression of truth, the suggestion of lies. This soul could soar high. Alas, that it could sink so low!

We shall not discuss the Bacon theory any further. We have examined it so far as it meets or crosses our own conclusions. But we cannot ignore the case for Edward de Vere, seventeenth Earl of Oxford. It is a serious and scholarly theory and has converted many earnest Shakespeareans in this country and outside it.

It is generally recognised, both by orthodox Stratfordians and by the heretics, that some of the plays of the First Folio have a long earlier history. To take *Hamlet*, we know that the story of the Danish chronicles served for one or more dramas, written and performed long before 1603, the year of the first Quarto. These early elements of the great

plays have been studied in the last two decades by a group of English and American writers, supporting the theory of Edward de Vere, seventeenth Earl of Oxford, as the real Shakespeare. Orthodox critics, as usual, ignore the writers or abuse them without reading their books. But to the true and earnest Shakespeare lover, these new researches are most valuable contributions to our Shakespeare knowledge. The theory is that the greater part of the plays were written by Oxford in the period of time between 1574 and 1603; his first compositions were not properly dramas, but masks and interludes for special performance at court or in some aristocratic homes, as was much the vogue at the time; these pieces were from the first rich in allusions to contemporary personalities and events at home and abroad: in France, in Spain, the Netherlands and the German Empire. The success of these masks made the poet revise and develop them more than once in the course of years between the late fifteen-seventies and the early sixteens, and every new revision brought more running allusions and pictures, but none of these early texts have reached us. In process of time most of the plays of the First Folio were supposedly completed by Oxford in the form in which we now read them. Some plays were written in collaboration with other playwrights or enlarged by them independently, such as *Henry VIII*, *Troilus and Cressida* and *The Winter's Tale*; others, as *Timon of Athens* and *The Tempest*, were left by the poet in incomplete drafts or only fragmentary parts of dialogue, or are even entirely spurious and were written after Oxford's death by other poets to serve the Londoners' demand for more plays of the popular author — *Cymbeline*, *Pericles*, *Two Noble Kinsmen* and, perhaps, again *The Tempest*.

Quite obviously, such an interpretation of the progress

of Shakespeare's work is, on broad lines, not inconsistent with the Quartos and Folios as we have them. It is also quite consistent, *mutatis mutandis*, with Rutland holding the pen. The researches of the Oxfordian writers constitute a whole system of new and, in many instances, convincing suggestions and conclusions. But the greater part of these investigations, namely, the earlier texts, lie outside our object. We have here but one question to examine — do the findings of the Oxfordian scholars disprove our own conclusions on Rutland's part in the thirty-six or thirty-seven plays? If the evidence for Rutland is shaken and the evidence for Oxford stronger, we will accept the new theory and join our efforts to work for Oxford's rights to immortality and our love. We may say beforehand that the discoveries of the Oxfordian scholars are very remarkable, their books fascinating, and they have done, in twenty years, more for the truth than our orthodox friends in three centuries.

Before giving a name to the plays, the founder of the theory, Mr. J. Thomas Looney, set down such identity marks of the poet as he could gather from a careful study of his works. In other words, he proceeded on the same lines as we did in these pages. In his first outline he noted some general characteristics of the poet. He found that Shakespeare was a man of recognised genius; apparently eccentric and mysterious; of intense sensibility; unconventional and not equally appreciated; a lyric poet of recognised talent and pronounced literary tastes; an enthusiast of the world of the drama; a man of superior classical education and the habitual associate of educated people.

These personality traits are perhaps not too strictly differentiated. A recognised poet of talent and genius cannot be called an inadequately appreciated person: if genius and

talent are recognised, what remains there to be appreciated? An eccentric is unconventional; an unconventional man is an eccentric. An apparently mysterious man is a poor mystery: he provokes curiosity and risks detection; a really mysterious man is unconspicuously so. Leaving these shifty grounds, we note that Mr. Looney's really tangible identification marks are as applicable to Roger Manners as to Edward de Vere. Shakespeare was a man of intense sensibility — so was Rutland, as we can see from his letters; of pronounced literary tastes — Rutland is described by his contemporaries as a patron of letters; an enthusiast of the drama — we find him going to the plays every day; — of superior classical education — he had the best that could be had; — the habitual associate of educated people — he belonged to the upper hundred of his time.

To this comprehensive sketch Mr. Looney added more personal traits. The poet was a man with feudal connections; a member of the higher aristocracy, connected with Lancastrian supporters; an enthusiast for Italy; a sportsman and a lover of music; loose and improvident in money matters; doubtful and somewhat conflicting in his relations to women; — of probable catholic leanings, but touched with scepticism. We mark that, and turn to Roger Manners. His ancestors came to Britain with the Conqueror, were connected, through Lady Anne St. Leger, with the Plantagenets, and went with them to the Crusades; the Manners fought for the Lancastrian King Henry VI in the War of the Roses; Roger lived and studied in Italy longer than any of his peers; his occupations at Belvoir Castle, in Sherwood and at Grant-ham were hunting and hawking; all kinds of musical instruments were bought for use at Belvoir; he spent lavishly on dress, arms and furniture; there are allusions to his hesitating

attitude to his lady friends in the writings of Rowland Whyte, Ben Jonson and Francis Beaumont. We do not know whether Rutland was a true protestant or a secret catholic. But Mr. Looney's penstroke is not unreserved here. Shakespeare certainly ridiculed puritan bigotry in three or four plays, but there is nothing to show he was a papist. The very word *catholic* does not appear in the plays. Thus it appears that when Mr. Looney's remarks are founded on facts, they confirm our inferences with respect to Roger Manners; when they are of a more personal description and supposedly point at Oxford, they are ambiguous and sometimes contradictory. Against these probabilities and possibilities we have to weigh the indications pointing exclusively at Rutland, which we have set down in the preceding pages.

Mr. Looney's brilliant volume soon found enthusiastic disciples and partisans. The mere titles of their books indicate their historical and literary importance. Col. B. R. Ward's "Mystery of W. H.", Dr. G. D. Rendall's "Shakespeare's Sonnets and Edward de Vere", Mr. Bertram C. Theobald's "Shakespeare's Sonnets Unmasked" and Mr. Looney's own essay on the same subject show quite plainly that, of all the poets suggested as the possible authors of the puzzling booklet of Shakespeare's Sonnets, Edward de Vere is by far the more probable candidate. The authorship of the plays is a different matter. Mr. Percy Allen's "The Life Story of Edward de Vere as William Shakespeare", "The Oxford Shakespeare Case Corroborated", as well as his other studies; the late Mr. Ernest Allen's articles; Admiral H. H. Holland's "Shakespeare through Oxford Glasses", Mrs. Eva T. Clark's "Hidden Allusions in Shakespeare's Plays" and "The Man who was Shakespeare", and Captain B. M. Ward's admirably documented biography of the Earl of Oxford should be

read by all true Shakespeare lovers. The apparent connections with contemporary events and writings, discovered in the Quartos and Folios by these scholars, are simply infinite and their analysis scholarly and delightful. It cannot however be asserted that the poet's identity is finally established in their works. Is the evidence stronger than the facts examined in our earlier chapters? We cannot exhaust the matter here: it would require a second volume to this story. We shall offer but a few general remarks.

I. The extant Quartos of Shakespeare's plays constitute two distinct groups. 1. The Quartos of *Titus Andronicus*, *The First Part of the Contention betwixt the Famous Houses of Lancaster and Yorke*, *The True Tragedie of Richard Duke of Yorke*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Much Ado about Nothing* and *Othello* were reproduced, with insignificant alterations and additions, in the Folio of 1623. These Quartos are Shakespeare's own, his mind, his pen. 2. The Quartos of *The Famous Victories of King Henry V*, *The Troublesome Raigne of King John*, *The Taming of a Shrew* and *King Leir* are but rough-hewn sketches of the corresponding dramas of the Folio. These Quartos are supposed by the Oxford school writers to be his early versions of the two parts of *King Henry IV*, *King Henry V*, *King John*, *The Taming of the Shrew* and *King Lear*. Such is also their theory with respect to other plays of the First Folio, which they attribute to Oxford. The literary quality of the extant pieces is, however, so vastly inferior to Shakespeare's dramas as to make them altogether a different kind of art. They are sucklings' babble against grand philosophy and poetry, and stepped into immortality 'like captives bound to a triumphant car' — only as timid shadows forecasting

the great plays: two heads and two quills. These crude pieces may be Oxford's or not, but they are not Shakespeare's.

II. In 1589 the anonymous author of the "Arte of English Poesie" wrote: "For tragedy Lord Buckhurst and Master Edward Ferrys do deserve the highest price [praise?]; the Earl of Oxford and Master Edwards of Her Majesty's Chapel for Comedy and Enterlude..." This is quite clear: Oxford wrote comedies and interludes, but not tragedies. In 1598 Francis Meres echoed: "These are our best for Tragedie, the Lorde *Buckhurst*, Doctor *I.eg* of Cambridge, Doctor *Edes* of Oxforde, maister *Edward Ferris*, the Author of the *Mirror for Magistrates*, *Marlow*, *Peele*, *Watson*, *Kid*, *Shakespeare*, *Drayton*, *Chapman*, *Decker*, and *Beniamin Jonson*..." The Earl of Oxford is not mentioned among these tragedians. "The best for Comedy amongst us be, *Edward Earle* of Oxforde, Doctor *Gager* of Oxforde, Maister *Rowley*, once a rare scholar of learned Pembroke Hall in Cambridge, Maister *Edwardes* one of her Maisties Chappell, eloquent and wittie *John Lilly*, *Lodge*, *Gascoyne*, *Greene*, *Shakespeare*, *Thomas Nash*, *Thomas Heywood*, *Anthony Mundaye* our best plotter, *Chapman*, *Porter*, *Wilson*, *Hathway*, and *Henry Chettle*..." This also is clear and positive: Oxford wrote comedies, Shakespeare, comedies and tragedies. Not one poet, but two.

III. In the last decades of the sixteenth century the rivalry and mutual intrigues between England and Spain had reached their highest tension. The defeat of the Armada in 1588 did not end the hostilities, and peace was eventually concluded between the two countries only in 1604. In June 1586, by a Privy Seal Dormant of the Queen, the Earl of Oxford was granted a yearly payment of £1000 with a special order to the Exchequer officers forbidding the control

of this appropriation. The duties incumbent on the grant were not specified. According to the Oxford theory, this sum was paid to the Earl for patriotic propaganda through the stage, in other words, for the composition and the performance of heroic dramas, stimulating her Majesty's subjects' loyalty and warlike spirit in her campaigns against Phillip II. These dramatic chronicles were written partly by the Earl himself, partly by other poets on his commission. In obedience to social conventions, the Earl wrote his dramas under a pen-name — William Shakespeare. Such a scheme was of course quite opportune and, if skillfully carried on, could bring good results. But if Oxford had been entrusted with it, it is extremely doubtful that the Histories of the First Folio were written by him.

King Henry V was, no doubt, a splendid piece of war propaganda. But the Hundred Years War is the only foreign war in the thirty six plays. It began triumphantly with the victories of the national hero who conquered half of France and ended miserably with his son losing all his conquests except one sea port on the Channel. *King Henry VIII*, a composition of doubtful authorship, describes the proceedings of a court of justice in Blackfriars in a divorce suit between the King and his wife, Catherine of Arragon. The king is shown true to history — as a heartless despot; the Queen, as a victim of his cruelty and the iniquitous servility of the churchmen-judges. The implication is that the King's subsequent marriage with Anne Boleyn was invalid and their child, Elizabeth Tudor, a bastard. This was not the way to exalt Queen Elizabeth in the eyes of her people. It is redeemed by the pompous scene of Anne Boleyn's coronation, but that scene, as we know, was written not by Shakespeare, but by another playwright. All the other Histories are

pictures of ruinous internal strife, not of war and conquest. And who are the actors in these bloody conspiracies and battles?

King John is an usurper and the murderer of the legitimate heir to the crown, Prince Arthur. King Richard II — a weakling, deposed by a rebellious subject and murdered. That rebel, King Henry IV, bemoaning his crime, is harassed by other rebels. King Henry VI, another weakling, is defeated in battle, deposed by the rebel Yorks and murdered. Edward, Earl of March, afterwards King Edward IV, slays the legitimate heir to the throne, Prince Edward of Lancaster, on the battlefield of Tewksbury. Richard III is the murderer of King Edward V. Usurpers and murderers among the kings; perjurers, traitors, successful rebels and murderers among the subjects, — such pictures could infuse in their spectators poor respect to a queen who had been excommunicated by the Pope, whose birthright was questionable, and whose subjects were divided by religious strife. At the time, the majority of the old nobility and a good number of the commoners in England were still devout catholics at heart or openly popish recusants. To them, Elizabeth was a bastard and a heretic. Could a man, paid to teach her subjects' obedience to authority and loyalty to her sovereignty, write the following lines? It is the Pope's Legate Pandulph who addresses King John:

Then by the lawful power that I have
Thou shalt stand curs'd and excommunicate,
And blessed shall be he that doth revolt
From his allegiance to an heretic,
And meritorious shall the hand be called,
Canonized and worship'd as a saint,
That takes away by any secret course
Thy hateful life.

How would a manufacturer of silk and velvet pay a salesman who advertised his wares as burlap and rags?

IV. There is still another reason for doubting Oxford's hand in the great Histories of the First Folio. The stage propaganda, if it was really carried on under the Queen's orders, was directed against Spain. Yet there is not a line in the thirty six plays which could in any manner be read as stirring or fanning hostility against Phillip II or his armies in an English audience. The only Spaniard appearing in these plays is Don Adriano de Armado in *Love's Labour's Lost*. This comedy, as we know, has in the text many hints at Bacon as its author. But even assuming that some of the scenes were written by Oxford, its worth as propaganda is nothing. Don Armado is a fantastic traveler at the court of the King of Navarre. The King expects him to "relate, in high-born words, the worth of many a knight from tawny Spain, lost in the world's debate", which suggests some stories from the Spanish *romans de chevalerie*. It is quite probable, as suggested by Mrs. Eva Clark, that Don Armado is a picture of Don Juan of Austria, the hero of Lepanto and the last of the knight errants. The skit may be amusing, but it is good-natured, by no means venomous. A touch of ridicule is not an instigation to aggression or hatred.

V. In circumstantial evidence *what has not happened* is often not less significant than what did occur. We have just remarked that the defeat of the Spanish Armada did not end the war. It lasted six years more. Here was an excellent opportunity for a paid propagandist to justify his pension by offering to the Londoners rich dramatic pictures of battles on the raging seas, with Gloriana herself as the chief heroine. Instead of that, Oxford writes *Antony and Cleopatra*, — a maker of kings deserting his ships to rush after a frightened

woman. Surely, no patriotic fire could be kindled by this. How and why is there no play celebrating Drake's victory in the First Folio?

The question is answered by a document. On July 20, 1586, the Venetian ambassador to Spain, Sr. Hieronimo Lippomano, reported to the Doge and the Senate about the increasingly strained relations between the Escorial and Westminster. There are a few significant lines in this report. What enraged Philip II, wrote Lippomano, "more than all else and has caused him to show a resentment such as he has never before displayed in all his life, is the account of the masquerades and comedies which the Queen of England orders to be acted at his expense". The conclusion is obvious. The Oxford theory is perfectly true as to the stage propaganda against Spain, but the objectionable masquerades and comedies have not reached us. These lost plays must have been worthy of Oxford's satirical vein and well calculated to incense both the Londoners' enthusiasm and the ire of the Spanish King. Obviously, these plays existed, but are not in the Folio. Oxford was a brilliant playwright, but he was not Shakespeare.

Chapter XVI.

Conclusion

"Unquestionably, the man is there. The real Shakespeare is somehow latent in the plays."

— George L. Kittredge

"Shakespeare was a man, a writer; there was no escape for him; when he wrote, it was himself that he related to paper, his own mind that he revealed."

— Prof. Sir Walter Raleigh

Objections to Rutland's authorship — Circumstantial evidence stronger than direct evidence — A brief retrospect — Rutland's autographs — His death.

LET us cast a look at the Epigraphs of our Chapters. A little mental effort will suffice to appraise the weight of evidence of these fragmentary lines. The writers quoted are either unflinching liegemen of Stratford on Avon or mere sceptics. Not one of them thought of Rutland as Shakespeare. We may imagine some two or three score skilful artists invited to contribute a separate piece to a jig-saw picture of William Shakspeare, actor and playwright. Each one draws his own piece; colors it with his own colors; and cuts it out according to his own fancy. The pieces are put together; they dovetail perfectly in shape and color and —

THE MAN'S PART OF A SONG

quoted in *Twelfth Night*, Act II, sc. 4, in Roger Manner's hand. The lines quoted are the only extant scripts of all Shakespeare's texts, Poems, Sonnets, or Plays. As evidence of authorship and as manuscripts, they are of immeasurable historical value.

I will not spend more time in answering you
 but will speak a few lines to you. I find you have
 done what you go to do and yet do
 not. I shall be glad to hear of you.

2. *Handwritten:* [Redacted]
 1. *Handwritten:* [Redacted]

not to let her once part with her friends & family.
 hand no power to move her from her situation.
 with the wages for 'till now it may not be
 as they may as for her and her place.
 I may stay and do no more deny me;
 once more farewell to Mr. L. to depart.
 But after all this I have what to do my heart.
 but fear I needs must leave the love that I did love.
 go thy way as for me since it may not be
 go thy way as for me but where thou
 not go, but where I may come Mother
 what shall I do my love is now departed.
 she is as pure as she is sweet & kind.
 she will not be separated with prayers & requests.
 if she comes no more shall I do therefore
 if she come no more what can I
 say to let her go, or come or long

1. 1/2 + 1/2 = 1
2. 1/2 + 1/2 = 1
3. 1/2 + 1/2 = 1
4. 1/2 + 1/2 = 1

the picture is not Shakspeare, but another man. This seems an absurd impossibility. Yet it is exactly what we have seen in the pages of this book. We have collected quotations from our foremost Shakespeareans; there are more than thirty in the Epigraphs; more in the text; still more in the Notes to the chapters; and others could be added. And these quotations, each contributing a characteristic feature to the others, converge not on Shakspeare, but on Rutland.

Ruffled Stratford shriners may say that we accept their dicta when they suit us and discard them when they do not. This may seem so to them; but the truth is that we agree with them when their arguments are sound and disagree when they are wrong. It is foolish to contend that a man can know everything without having learned anything. It is sound to say that a crude play is crude and a true character true.

Those Shakespeare lovers who find it impossible to separate their delight in his works from their devotion to the Stratford tradition must face the facts. The facts are simple. The plays do not harmonise with Shakspeare's life; the plays are a faultless reflection of Rutland's career. The logical consequence is unavoidable. Either Shakspeare the playwright knew what he was doing, or not. In the first case, we must imagine that, having for some reason conceived the strange idea of deceiving the Londoners and convincing them that the author of the plays was the Earl of Rutland, he adopted two cunning devices on the lines of his self-inspired obsession. Through all his life, he planned and wrote his plays not as an expert dramatist, but as a careless amateur; at the same time he drew through them a red herring pointing at Roger Mannors. If our common sense rebels against these absurdities, our only recourse is a still more

fantastic conception. We must imagine an ironically disposed supernatural agency — a Fate, a Moira, a sardonic Ariel, an antic Ape-Devil who for twenty years went through the perverse pranks of secretly watching the heart and actions of Roger Manners and prompting Shakspeare the actor to make heavy blunders in his greatest plays, and unconsciously to introduce into them by the dozens unmistakable allusions to the Earl as their real author. We leave the alternative to the believers.

We have adopted from our first page the principle of truth and the whole truth. We have neither the need nor the inclination to ignore the objections which have been made and may be made against our conclusions.

The first objection to Rutland's authorship is that he was too young to have written *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece*. This is quite true, for, as we have seen, the two Poems were written by Bacon. But it is no objection against the Earl's being the author of the Plays.

It may indeed at first sight seem strange that no reference to Rutland should be found in contemporary writings. But it requires no great effort to realize the conditions of the time and the particular circumstances of the case. The matter being secret, only by a breach of confidence could those who knew write about it. A secret is not necessarily betrayed by those to whom it has been confided, and if it is, the breach of faith is not spread far and wide by proclamation. The fact that no allusions have reached us does not prove that none were ever made. The secret had not then attained the importance it has today. Shakespeare's plays were popular in London, yet as late as 1598 Francis Meres named him after five other dramatists. To the Elizabethans, he was not a demi-god — only a successful playwright. The

plays were published under the name of a popular actor and that actor ostensibly acknowledged them as his own. There was nothing to arouse suspicion or curiosity.

It should, however, be said that we have positive indications of the Earl's literary recreations. In 1598, John Florio published his "Worlde of Wordes" — an English-Italian dictionary. It was dedicated to "The Right Honorable Patrons of vertue, Patterns of Honor, Roger, Earl of Rutland, Henrie, Earl of Southampton, Lucie, Countess of Bedford". After a long eulogy of Southampton, Florio wrote: "No less must be attributed to your embellished graces (my most noble, most gracious and most graceful Earl of Rutland), well entered in the toong, ere your Honor entered Italie, therein so perfected as what needeth a Dictionarie?"

In Ita'lie your Lordship well hath seene
Their manners, monuments, magnificence,
Their language learnt in sound, in stile, in sense,
Proving by profiting, where you have been,
Remantling grave conceits in coulours greene.

Despite the absurd affectation and alliterations, this is good English. If we take the words in their plain blunt sense, a spade a spade, the verse, "Remantling grave conceits in coulours greene" can only mean that Rutland wrote either tales, or poems, or plays, in which he pictured the scenery and the life he had observed in Italy and illustrated the philosophy he had been taught at the University of Padua. At the time of publication of Florio's Dictionary he had written *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *The Merchant of Venice*, and *Two Gentlemen of Verona* — pictures of Italian manners, monuments, magnificence. Taken

**THE SECOND OR WOMAN'S PART
OF THE SONG**

on page 273.



Farwell and youth if thou hadst not been blinde
out of myne eyes thou mightst have spied my minde
but now I playnly se, how thou wouldst have liued me
sure I was accurst, not to goe at first
sure I was accurst, no tell me
Sweet stay and heere how it beall me

Farwell yet when I first did heare thee speake
and had but longe Farwell my hart would breake.
but now mine eye do finde thy love is like the white
what a foole was I, to be like to die
what a foole was I I was not
yet say I was a foole I passe not

Farwell farwell nay stay haue one thinge more,
which but for shame I would haue said before
when we use such delay, we thinke not as we say
if thou know not yet what I meane by it
if thou know not yet, come true
who neuer minded to deeme thee

Farwell sweet sad go keepe my harte in gye
untill thy tender yeares be come to age
and since I haue betrayed, my love by what a line
if you will you may go or come or stay
if you will you may forsake me
nay stay, or if you go come take me,

wo me alas why did I let him go
these be the fruites of idle swaimg no
~~now that you can forsake me how can you~~

say but if he gone then I am undone
say but if he gone, oh hold him,
for the things are yet untold him

by themselves. Florio's lines tell us that Rutland was a poet in the original broadest meaning of the term; guided by facts, we read, he was a playwright.

The other seemingly reasonable objection to Rutland's authorship is that not a copy of the plays or of one play, not even a stray leaflet with hasty random jottings of some scene of Shakespeare's dramas, has been discovered in the archives of Belvoir Castle. How could it happen that not a single line of the greatest of poets should have escaped destruction? We will invite orthodox writers, instead of indulging in futile bad language, to apply some of their vehemence to strengthen and expand this apparently unaccountable circumstance. They may ask again and again, where are Rutland's manuscripts? Where are his notes, his proof-sheets, his corrected quartos? Where, the originals of the twenty new plays of the Folio, which must have been kept at Belvoir "with scarcely any corrections in them", that is, engrossed by careful copyists? After these critics have exhausted their ingenuity and marshalled this objection in its most formidable array, we will ask them to answer it. They *know* that it was William Shakespeare who wrote the plays. Where are Shakspeare's manuscripts? He had no reason for destroying or concealing them. But as we have seen before, the disappearance of Rutland's scripts is but a logically inevitable consequence of Bacon's ambition for posthumous fame.

The case of William Stanley, sixth Earl of Derby, is a final answer to these objections. Stanley wrote plays; many people knew it, but nobody wrote about it. Francis Meres does not mention his name. He kept his own company of actors; he wrote for the common theatres; perhaps also for the Court. Everybody saw his plays at the Rose, the

Curtain, the Red Bull or the Boar's Head. Not a few persons must have known him to be the author of some of those plays. Yet neither his friends, nor his actors, nor his rivals appear to have discussed or even mentioned his dramatic occupations in their correspondence. There is no such reference in any contemporary publication. We do not know whether he wrote openly, anonymously, or under a pseudonym. Not a line of his drama has survived. We would never think of him as a dramatist, had not a secret agent of the government intercepted two letters of a Catholic spy in London, George Fenner, who reported to Venice and to Antwerp: "Our Earle of Derby is busye in penning comydies for the common players." This case is doubly significant. First, because it is quite similar to that of Rutland. The fact must have been known to many outside of Stanley's circle and intimate friends: copyists, theatre-managers, actors, printers and publishers. Yet we know not even a title of any play written by him. Secondly, because his secret was kept as well as Rutland's. Had Fenner been more careful or the Queen's agents less active, the secret would have died with the dramatist.

This is a cardinal point. We beg all our fellow-lovers, Stratfordians, Baconians, and Oxfordians, to give it its full "color, weight, and heat", for it is the *coup de grâce* to unbelievers. It disposes with what otherwise would be the only real objection to Rutland's authorship.

Circumstantial evidence is often stronger than direct evidence — particularly so, when it is deduced from testimony which by itself is neither for nor against an assumption. A witness can be trusted when he knows not whether

his words may help or harm the prisoner in the dock. Such, as the reader may have perceived, is the testimony of orthodox Shakespeareans in our case. They do not know that while writing about the actor-playwright of Stratford, they are all the time accumulating evidence in favor of Rutland. Obviously, their good faith is above suspicion. If a letter were discovered containing some such positive statement as: "Roger Manners was the author of Shakespeare's plays", would such evidence convince orthodox writers? Certainly not. They would say: the writer may have lied; he may have been deceived. If a letter were produced containing such a sentence as: "William Shakspeare of Stratford told me he was not the author of the thirty-six plays of the First Folio," they would object: the letter is a forgery; the writer was a liar. But when orthodox critics, with Shakspeare the actor in mind, give us a clearly outlined figure of the poet and that figure accords in every feature, not with Shakspeare, but with Rutland, the logical conclusion as to the poet's identity cannot reasonably be questioned.

Of the thirty-five plays of the First Folio (*Love's Labour's Lost* being out of consideration as written by Bacon) five only have given us no tangible indications of the poet's identity: *King John*, *King Henry VIII*, *All's Well that Ends Well*, *Timon of Athens* and *The Tempest*. In each of the remaining thirty we have found distinct personal marks and occasionally a fingerprint of Roger Manners. To recapitulate these coincidences, would be to rewrite this book. But we must note that in several plays it is not one fact, one date, one name, but a series of dates, names and facts connected with the dramas, which correspond in a remarkable manner to Rutland's actions and reactions. We must

realize the significance and the weight of this progressive accumulation of coincidences. Each successive piece of evidence, wrote Edgar Poe, is multiple evidence — multiplied by hundreds or thousands. And we have not exhausted the matter: many more indications and more arguments might be added, all converging to the conclusion which we have drawn from the facts.

In discussing the so-called Shakespeare problem, an English writer, Andrew Lang, suggested an ostensibly annihilating, sledge-hammer argument against modern heretic theories. "The idea of the Great Unknown," he wrote, "has for its partisans the advantage that, as the life of the august shadow is wholly unknown, we cannot show, as in Bacon's case, how he was occupied while the plays were being composed." How true is this with reference to our notes? We are not presenting a shadow. We began with a shadow, that is, indeed, with a tentative sketch of the poet's personality, founded upon indications gleaned in the plays. We discovered that a man of flesh and blood corresponded very accurately to our tentative notion, and we examined the possibility of that man's being the author of the plays published under the pseudonym of William Shakespeare. To the ironical and, by implication, crushing question, How was that "shadow" occupied while the dramas were being composed, we may answer:

When the first play, *Titus Andronicus*, was written — an accumulation of unspeakable horrors interspersed with various Latin quotations — Roger Manners was studying Greek and Latin at Queen's College, in Cambridge, and occasionally enjoying the performance of Latin and English

plays written by junior collegians, every one of whom, as English historians tell us, had a play in his desk, and some of whom wrote tragedies surpassing even *Titus Andronicus* in the crudest atrocities. He was still in college in 1594 and 1595, when the immature and crude two Histories, i.e. "The First Part of the Contention betwixt the two famous Houses of Yorke and Lancaster" and "The True Tragedie of Richard, Duke of Yorke", were published for the first time.

During the years 1596-97, the time of composition of the next early plays, all with the plot laid in Italy, Roger Manners was living in Italy as a student of the University of Padua. Being a richly gifted young man, he could follow his courses *utriusque juris*, and occasionally turn from the study of Cicero and Quintilian to write a few lines of his own in a lighter vein.

When *Richard II* and *Richard III* were written, Rutland was living in London, frequently appearing at Court and, not infrequently, at the common theatres, The Curtain, The Rose, and The Swan. Probably, from time to time, at Essex House, at Barnes' Elms, at Tichbourn, and in other places, he was forced to listen to highly critical, if not treasonable, comments on the cruel reigns of Queen Elizabeth's kingly father and her royal sister, and perhaps on the Queen's own words and deeds, rights and titles.

At the time of the composition of *Midsummer Night's Dream* and of the three light comedies, each one ending with two happy marriages, Rutland and his friend Southampton were courting the two ladies whom they subsequently married and who, with the two friends, were portrayed in *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, in *Much Ado about Nothing*, and in

As You Like It, as has been established by orthodox Stratfordian critics.

In 1599, some months *before* the publication of *Much Ado*, and *King Henry V*, the two plays which alluded to Essex's expedition against the Irish rebels, Rutland was on board the Earl's warships or camping in Ireland under England's banners.

When *Hamlet*, with all its gloom and sadness, and *Measure for Measure*, with the death sentence hanging over poor Claudio, were taking shape and form in the poet's mind, Rutland was confined in the Tower under fear of the henchman's axe. He was still in jail when the lines were written in which Hamlet, speaking of his own country, utters the disconsolate words: "To me, it is a prison."

The same *King Lear*, *Macbeth*, *Othello*, and *Timon*, the misanthrope, were written when Rutland had lost his nearest friend Essex on the block; his other friend Southampton, was immured in the Tower for life, and he himself was banished from the Court and half ruined by a heavy fine.

When the plays were composed which reflect resignation to life's deceptions and bitterness, — *The Winter's Tale*, *Cymbeline*, and *The Tempest*, Rutland was a free man, living in peaceful retirement on his estate. He then had full leisure to revise, remodel and enlarge the original scenes of the earlier versions of his compositions. In short, the events of Roger Manham's life dovetail with the plays as the thirty-two black squares of a chess-board with the thirty-two white squares.

The last feature of the comparison, as we know, is a

sad one. After Rutland's death in 1612 not a single authentic play appears to have been written under Shakespeare's name. Perhaps, after all, orthodox writers are not altogether wrong when they call this shadow an august one.

To realize the natural connection between a poet's life and his works, we have but to think of Dante, Goethe, Byron. But to explain the perfect concordance of Rutland's life with Shakespeare's dramas as unrelated coincidences we must imagine that Dante, Goethe, Byron were common minds; that other men, great poets, wrote their great works; and that by numberless miraculous coincidences these works are truthful chronicles, not of the experiences, joys and sorrows of their real authors, but of three commonplace individuals whose names happen to be Byron, Goethe and Dante and who never wrote a line of verse. If this is possible, Shakspeare of Stratford may be the author of Shakespeare's plays. If not, they are Rutland's.

We know from John Florio that Rutland was a poet. Can it really be that we have not a line of his verses?

There are among the documents preserved at Belvoir Castle two scraps of old paper with the text of a love poem in ten stanzas written on them. We have mentioned this little piece of poetry in one of our earlier chapters. It is divided in two parts, of five stanzas each. The first is the man's part, the second the woman's. The text on the two separate sheets is written in the same hand, but the first part is a hasty rough draft, while the second — a model of exquisite penmanship in the then fashionable Italian script. It reveals a man who loved pen and ink and handled his quill as the gentle masters of the Quattrocento plied their most delicate brushes. Who

but a calligrapher would think of comparing a dying man with a badly written letter of the alphabet? King John, with the poison burning him, groans in agony: "I am a scribbling form, drawn with a pen upon a parchment." Hamlet confessed to Horatio that "he once did hold it a baseness to write fair and labored to forget that learning". The first stanza of the man's part is:

Farewell deare life since thou must needs be gone,
myne eyes do see my life is almost done,
nay, I will neu die, so long as I can spie
ther be many mo' though that she do go,
therebe many mo', I feare not
why then let her go, I care not.

We turn back to Shakespeare's happy comedies:

Maria. Nay, good Sir Toby.

Sir Toby. Farewell, deare heart, since I must needs be gone . . .

Clown. His eyes do show his dayes are almost done.

Malvolio. Is't euen so.

Sir Toby. But I will neuer dye.

Clown. Sir Toby, there you lye.

Mar. This is much credit to you.

Sir Toby. Shall I bid her go?

Clown. What an if you do?

Sir Toby. Shall I bid him go, and spare not?

Clown. O, no no no no, you dare not.

The poem was printed in a "Booke of Ayres" brought out by Robert Jones in 1599. The editor mentioned in his preface that he published "the contentions of diverse gentlemen without their consent," but did not give their names. Who, we wonder, may have been the poet whose lines Shakespeare introduced in his comedy? Did he again quote himself, as we have often seen it done in his other plays? And why

should the insignificant verses be preserved in Belvoir Castle? The two parts of the poem, the draft and the fair copy, are in the hand of Roger Manners. Not a fingerprint this time, but the whole hand. Sooner or later these two leaflets will be recognized as England's most sacred national heirlooms,

Why, it may be asked, should not Rutland have published the plays under his own name after Queen Elizabeth's death? That we do not know, and it is idle to pretend that we do. It may be said that, having demurred ten years, it mattered not to delay longer. There was no particular reason for unveiling the secret. It may have been, and it probably was a fact, that the poet himself never thought of his works as we think of them. In the dedication of the First Folio the plays are described as trifles. They must have been more than that to Rutland; but it is just so that he would speak of them. We can very well conceive, in his case, a supreme indifference to fame among those whom, with all good will to them, he could only consider as *hombres que no lo son* — semblances of men. Not many knew the secret delights of the poet's hours of solitude. Why should the vulgar?

In the light of truth, Shakespeare's dramas assume a deeper and nobler value and virtue than in the mist of legendary tales, however dear to us from the happy and innocent days of childhood. Through the soft grey of time, they appear to us as the quintessence of the culture and the spirit of old England and a crystal-lucid revelation of the sublime, but not supernatural, powers of genius.

Also, these poems stir in us a keener response, when we can read in them the reflection of a noble mind and the confessions of a great heart than when we consider them as the miraculous production of a vulgar hand. If we think of

Roger Manners as the real Shakespeare, the works speak of him from every page, not to say from every line. We recognize him in numberless passages so distinctly that we can assert with confidence: there he sighs and smiles for Valentine, for Bassanio, for Orsino; here, for himself. There, his complaints are all in sport; here, his heart is heavy and the sorrowfully sweet words are the physic which allays the bitterness of his affliction. It may be painful to desert a long familiar shrine; but it is just to carry our worship to the true god. And it will bring its reward.

From the accounts of Belvoir Castle, it appears that Roger Manners often visited Cambridge and occasionally stayed there for some time. During one of these visits, the news came to Belvoir of his death on the 26th of June, 1612. He was then in his thirty-sixth year. The body was brought to Bottesford Church in Leicestershire, the ancestral resting place of the Manns, and buried there with the usual ceremonies. Nothing is known of the cause and circumstances of his death. His widow, the Lady Elizabeth, died a few weeks after him at the age of twenty-seven. She was laid to rest beside him. A splendid monument was erected over husband and wife by the successor to the title, Francis Manners. The deceased Earl is reposing on his back, clad in plated armour and ermine mantle, his hands joined devotionally. His wife is in the same attitude, a few steps lower. The monument is a fine specimen of renaissance statuary and ornamentation. It was the work of a London master. Four years later William Shakspeare of Stratford on Avon departed this life in his native town. There was no bequest for a memorial in his will, but after some time a monument to his memory was placed in the church of the little town. Though less richly

ornamented, it was modeled after the same design as that of Roger Manners at Bottesford, and was built by the same tomb-maker. For three hundred years, men from all parts of the world have trodden the way to the London actor's burial place, there to lavish their tribute of gratitude for the noble legacy of the plays he never wrote or even claimed as his own. The imprint of his name on these plays will remain through ages, even when the legend of his poetic genius will be mentioned only with a smile. For three hundred years Rutland's name was hardly remembered in his own country. The time has come for it to be immortal with Shakespeare's immortal plays.

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Appendix

One more question to orthodox Shakespeareans.

The circumstances of the murder of Francesco della Rovere, introduced in the dumb show in *Hamlet*, are reported in Italian chronicles. Apart from Beluzzi, named in the text, it is told with many details in *Bontempi*, Ricordi, *Sardi*, Annala, *Giovio*, Elogia Virorum Bellica Virtute Illustrium, *Ugolini*, Storia dei Conti e Duchi di Urbino, and *Leoni*, Vita di Francesco Maria Montefeltre della Rovere. Two of these writers reported that the Duke was poisoned by his barber. The poison being poured in the ear of the King in the dumb show is entirely Shakespeare's invention. The story was published in London as early as 1581 in Denniston's Memoirs of the Dukes of Urbino. This suggests one more question which we must address to Prof. Dover-Wilson personally.

After seventeen years of work, the learned commentator has published three monographs on *Hamlet*, two on the manuscripts of the tragedy and one on its problems. In this last volume, "What Happens in Hamlet?", he discusses not less than eleven enigmas in *The Mousetrap* dumb show. He is particularly interested in this scene. "*The Murder of Gonzaga*," he writes, "bears all the marks of being founded upon an Italian original... Indeed, there are even indications of a historical foundation for the tale, since according to Dowden, 'In 1538 the Duke of Urbino, married to a Gonzaga, was murdered by Luigi Gonzaga, who dropped poison into his ear.'" The learned critic adds in a foot-note: "Dowden unfortunately omits his authority. G. Sarrazin instances another Gonzaga murder on May 7. 1592 (Sh. Jahrbuch, 1895, p. i69)."

Notes

CHAPTER I

Page 17.

Kittredge, "Shakespeare", pp. 35, 36: "The most terrifying instance of what this one-man policy can accomplish in the way of darkening counsel may be seen in the case of *Hamlet*. This is commonly treated as a one-part tragedy. We have even achieved a proverb that anything that lacks or loses its chief reason for existence is 'like the play of *Hamlet* with *Hamlet* left out'. That is an immensely significant saying. It demonstrates in a flash the blind and naive perversity of three-quarters of our Shakespearean criticism."

Logan Pearsall Smith, "On Reading Shakespeare", p. 39.

Chambers, "A Survey", Introductory Sonnet:

The babbling tongues, the minds that cannot hold

An equal course till Time's full circle meets,

The fretful pens shod with an egoist's gold.

Master, deep read in man's fantastic brain,

Smile from thy sculptured stone, and leave us ain.

Page 18.

Dover-Wilson, "The Essential Shakespeare", p. 8: "We have come to look at Shakespeare through the wrong end of the biographical telescope. . . ."

Page 19.

Dover-Wilson, pp. 12, 24, 50, 58, 62, 64, 105, 107. The characteristics of the poet are enumerated and substantiated in the book with convincing earnestness. The picture is living under the critic's pen.

Page 20. c.

See also Grant White, Fripp, and others: "More convincing is the *unconscious* intrusion of the lawyer to the *detriment in not a few cases of the poetry and the art* . . . — "His legal terms are legion . . . but, most remarkable of all, they flow from him in many instances unawares."

CHAPTER II

Page 35.

Gilbert Slater, "Seven Shakespeares", pp 44-45 See also Sir Ed. Sullivan, "Shakespeare and the Waterways of North Italy", XIXth Century and after, Aug. 1908; "Shakespeare and Italy", *ibid* Jan. & Feb. 1918.

K. Elze, "Essays on Shakespeare", p. 271.

Charles A. Brown, "Shakespeare's Autobiographical Poems", pp 100-108.

Madden, "The Diary of Master William Silence", *passim*.

Page 39.

John Bailey, "Shakespeare"; Dover-Wilson, p. 24: "That Shakespeare was himself passionately fond of music is witnessed by the countless references to music and singing in his plays."

Page 39.

Arthur Acheson: "Shakespeare impersonates himself . . in the character of Jaques." "Shakespeare's Sonnet Story," p. 393.

Page 39.

Morton Luce: "Jaques is another Hamlet." Preface to *As You Like It*, Arden Ed; Frank Harris: "Shakespeare, growing conscious of these changes in his own temperament, embodied them in . . the melancholy Jaques" "The Man Shakespeare and His Tragic Story," pp 13-15

CHAPTER IV

Page

Irvin Eller, "Belvoir Castle", pp 3-54

Page 60.

Eller, p. 38

Pages 64-65.

Rutland Papers, Hist. MSS Com, IV, pp. 388-391.

CHAPTER V

Page 72.

F. S. Boas, "University Drama in the Tudor Age", pp 290 ff.
MooreSmith, *Laelia*, XXIII.

Page 81.

MS in the Bodleian, Oxford, Douce, p 234.

Page 85.

Same M₃.

Page 87.

Same Ms.

Page 79.

Moore Smith, X-XI..

CHAPTER VI

Page 93.

The name Rutland in connection with two different historical characters appears altogether seventeen times in three plays, *Richard II*, *3 K. Henry VI*, and *Richard III*. The passages are:

Rich. II

1. Madam, you must call him Rutland now — V.2.43.
2. Until thou bid me joy, By pardoning Rutland, my transgressing boy — V.3.96.

3Hen. VI

3. Where is your darling Rutland? Look, York — I.4.78.
4. What, hath thy fiery heart so parch'd thin entrails That not a tear can fall for Rutland's death? — I.4.88.
5. These tears are my sweet Rutland's obsequies — I.4.147.
6. A napkin steeped in the harmless blood Of sweet young Rutland—II.1.63.
7. 'Twas you that kill'd young Rutland, was it not? — II.2.98.
8. A 'reach'ous coward, As thou didst kill our tender brother Rutland — II.2.115.
9. Suppose this arm is for the Duke of York, And this for Rutland — II.4.3.
10. This is the hand that stabb'd thy father York; And this the hand that slew thy brother Rutland — II.4.7.
11. Not contented that he lopp'd the branch In hewing Rutland — II.6.48.
12. Thou pitied'st Rutland; I will pity thee — II.6.74.
13. Whose unstanched thirst York and young Rutland could not satisfy — II.6.84.

Rich. III

14. To hear the piteous moan that Rutland made When black-faced Clifford shook his sword at him — I.2.158.
15. A clout Steep'd in the faultless blood of pretty Rutland — I.3.178.
16. I had a Rutland too, thou help'st to kill him — IV.4.45.
17. Present to her, — as sometime Margaret Did to thy father, steep'd in Rutland's blood — A handkerchief — IV.4.275.

The scene of the death of Edmund, Earl of Rutland, at the hands of Lord Clifford on the battlefield at Sandal Castle in *The Third Part of King Henry VI* is taken from Holinshed. It is significant.

Rutland. Ah, let me live in prison all my days,
And when I give occasion of offense.

Then let me die, for now thou hast no cause.

Clifford. No cause?

Thy father slew my father; therefore die!

And the boy mortally wounded, falls with the unexpected quotation:

Di faciant ludis summa sit ista tuae!

Would Ovid be quoted by an actor of the Rose or the Swan Tavern or by an college undergraduate of the same name as the youth slain by Clifford?

Page 97.

In connection with the same drama, Act IV, sc. 8, it has been asked in Chapter II, p. 34, where could Shakespeare have obtained indications of the

presence of foreign soldiers in the army of the rebellious Edward of York, led by him against King Henry. The episodes introduced in the drama by Shakespeare are as follows.

Edward Plantagenet has landed in England with his army and, having proclaimed himself king, is marching on London to depose Henry of Lancaster. The factions in the land are at mortal strife. The King's forces are weakening; Edward is supported by numerous partisans of the Yorks and his triumph is imminent. Warwick, the King-maker, is the leader of the Lancastrians. On this background Shakespeare has devised a picture of which the dialogue is entirely his own. (IV,8). King Henry calls a council of war in London. Warwick, Somerset, Oxford, Exeter and Montague are present. So is George, Duke of Clarence, Edward's brother, who for the moment is against him on the side of the Lancastrians. Warwick sums up the situation in a few lines, gives his directions to the others, and leaves for Warwickshire to rally the King's supporters:

Warwicke. "What counsel, lords? Edward from Belgia,
With hastie Germanes, and blunt Hollanders,
Hath pass'd in safetie through the Narrow Seas,
And with his troupes doth march amain to London,
And many giddie people flock to him . . .
In Warwickshire I have true-hearted friends,
Not mutinous in peace, yet bold in war.
These will I muster up. And thou, son Clarence,
Shall stir up in Suffolk, Norfolk and in Kent
The knights and gentlemen to come with thee
Thou, brother Montague," . . . etc.

The anxieties of the Lancastrians seem relieved and the King's safety assured, when desperate calls of "A Lancaster, a Lancaster!" are heard without, and armed Yorkists led by Edward Plantagenet break into the room.

Edward. "Seize on the shame-faced Henry; bear him hence,
And once again proclaim is King of England . . .
Hence with him to the Tower."

All this scene is poetic invention. But Warwick's first words: "Edward from Belgia with hastie Germanes and blunt Hollanders . . ." introduced a new historical fact — the presence of foreign soldiers in Edward's army — and testified that these were Germans and Dutchmen. We ask, how did the poet discover this? There was not a hint of the fact in the Chronicles from which he gathered his information. Or was this, too, nothing but poetic invention?

It was history. Warwick's speeches in the drama reproduced a letter of the real Earl of Warwick dated March 25, 1471, on hearing of Edward Plantagenet's landing in England and addressed to Henry Vernon of Haddon in the county of Derby. The Earl wrote:

"Right trusty and righte wel biloved I grete you well. And desire and hertily pray you that in asmoche as yonder man Edward, the Kinges oure soverain lord grct ennemy rebelle and traitour, is now late arrived in the north parties of this land and commyng fast on southward accompnayed with Fleminges, Esterlings, and Danes, not exceeding the nombre of all that he ever hath of 1500^{or} persones nor the contre as he cometh nothing falling to him, ye woll therefor incontynente and furthwithe aftir the sight hereof dispose you toward me to Coventre with as many people defensibly arraied as ye can redily make, and that ye be with me there in all haste possible as my vary singular trust is in you and as I mowe doo thing to your wele or worship hereafter And God kepe you, Writen at Warrewik the xxvth day of Marche."

The postscript in the Earl's own hand ran: "Henry I pray you ffaile not now as ever I may do ffor you." The signature is: "Therred of Warrewk and Salisbury. Lieutenant to the King oure souverain Henry the Sexte." The Flemings, or Dutchmen, and the Esterlings, or Easterlings, in Warwick's letter as the "hastie Germanes and blunt Hollanders" in Shakespeare's line. A few weeks later "false, sleeting, perjured Clarence" had joined his brother against Henry of Lancaster. Warwick was slain at Barnet; the Lancastrians defeated at Tewkesbury, and the victor, Edward IV himself, informed Henry Vernon of his triumph: "Cause and consideration why we write to you at this time is this, albeit God of his grace hath yeven unto us the victory of our greet rebelles and that Margaret late called Quene is in our hands, her sone Edward slayn, Edmond called Duc of Somerset, John Erl of Devonshir with alle the other lordes, knightes, and noble men that were in their company taken or slayn . . ."

In Shakespeare it is:

King Edward. "Once more we sit in England's royal throne.
Repurchased with the blood of enemies
What valiant foemen, like to autumn's corn,
Have we mowed down, in tops of all their pride!"

Where could Shakespeare have discovered the historical documents just quoted? Warwick's letter and that of King Edward IV are now, and have been for more than four hundred years, in the Library of the Castle of Belvoir, where a hundred years after the War of the Roses, when the Trilogist of *Henry VI* was written, the only man in England who had access to them was the lord of the castle, Roger Manners.

CHAPTER VII

Page 105.

The writer holds the following letter from the Director of the Library of the University of Padua:

"R. Biblioteca Universitaria di Padova Padova, 20 luglio 1935 XIII — Chiarissimo Professore, Per desiderio della Segretaria della R. Università abbiamo confrontato la data che tanto le interessa per la biographia di Roger Manners ed abbiamo potuto constatarne l'esattezza. — A Pag. 104 retro del registro d'immatricolazione dell'Università legista (n. 30 dell'Archivio antico) si trova scritto:— 'Rogerius comes Rutlandiae Anglus hab.n Unguem lesam (sic) pollicis dextri 28 Martij 1596.' — Lieti di averle potuto fare cosa grata, saluiamo con ossequio formulando i migliori auguri per la sua opera. — Il Direttore A. Fanini."

Page 106.

Sarrazin, "Shakespeare in Mailand", Jahrbuch, XLVI, 1910, — "Shakespeare in Mantua", Jahrbuch, XXIX, XXX, 1894. — Zuputza, Julius, "Ueber die Fabel in Shakespeare's *Two Gentlemen*", Jahrbuch XXIII, 1888. — Sarrazin, "Der Räuberwald in der Lombardie", Jahrbuch, XXXIX, 1903. — Sir Arthur Sullivan, "Shakespeare and the Waterways of North Italy," Nineteenth Century and After. Aug. 1908. Jan. and Feb. 1918.

Page 107.

Karl Elze, "Italienische Skizzen zu Shakespeare", Jahrbuch, VIII, 1873, 59. — Theodore Elze, "Bellario und die Studenten in Padua", Jahrbuch, XIII 1878, XIII. 1878, 137 ff.

CHAPTER X

Page 157.

Van Steffanson, "Shakespeare in Elsinore", *Contemp. Review*, Jan. 1896.

CHAPTER XII

Page 197.

The story of the Spanish Regidor is told in a letter reproduced in *Jahrbuch*, XXXI, 1895, 165 ff.

CHAPTER XIV

Page 249.

Rt. Hon. J. M. Robertson. "Another 'Ghost' for Shakespeare". *The Observer*, March 2, 1919.

Page 250.

The quoted lines are from "A Life of William Shakespeare", 1915, p. 651, note. Some time later Sir Sidney Lee repeated his absurd statements. He wrote in "The Illustrated London News", January 25, 1919: "In 1907 a cultivated Elizabethan nobleman, the sixth Earl of Rutland, who is well known to have interested himself in the Elizabethan drama, and in the dramatic profession, was confidently hailed in a German book published at Munich as the real 'Shakespeare', and the greeting was quite seriously repeated in a French volume of imposing size, published at Paris in 1913."

There is not a word in the contemporary texts to show that Francis Manners, the sixth Earl of Rutland, took any interest in the drama or the stage. Celestin Demblon's first book, "Lord Rutland est Shakespeare", was published not in 1913, but in 1912, and in no more imposing size than an ordinary French novel, inferior in size to English quarto novels. Lee not only never opened the works he ridiculed, but obviously never even saw Demblon's book.

We may record yet another instance of the corrosive action of the Stratford legend on the Shakespearean mind. Prof. Dover-Wilson, in his *Essential Shakespeare*, "revealed" through continuous study of over thirty years, quotes on the title page the following lines from Keats: "Shakespeare led a life of Allegory; his works are the comments on it."

An allegory is a figure of speech or a figurative story, designed to express ideas different from the allegory itself, a comment is an explanation of a text that requires explanation to be fully understood. If we follow Keats and unless we call a pebble a pearl and a lark a crow, we must conclude that when William Shakespeare married, deserted his wife and children, became an indifferent actor, speculated in land, traded in malt, and lent money to less prosperous fellow-townsmen, he was also performing a series of "allegories", and in order to make his plain and all-too common actions intelligible to mankind, he wrote thirty-six plays, which, although studied for two or three hundred years by hundreds of learned writers in thousands of books, yet remain in need of explanation. This, if we call a spade a spade, is the absurdity implied in Keats' sentence. And it is this absurdity that Prof. Dover-Wilson quotes as the quintessence of his "revelation" of what Shakespeare was and did. "Here, in a nutshell, is the kind of man I believe Shakespeare to have been," his Preface concludes, and "I might perhaps have called it a credible Shakespeare."

And yet, literally, the book is a gem, and historically, a priceless piece of evidence. It happens not infrequently that a scholar, delighted at having

achieved some good results, thinks of no further efforts and, his mind relaxed, fails to perceive an opening, promising new prospects. In this present case, we have just such an opening. We shall not neglect it. Prof. Dover-Wilson is one of the most erudite Shakespeare scholars of the world. His notes and glossaries in the latest Cambridge editions of separate Shakespeare plays are the best that we possess. How could his study of the only undisputable evidence in the case — the playwright's words, images, and thoughts — have so misled him? The answer is, they most obviously did not. His adventure, as he calls it, is indeed a revelation of the real, the essential Shakespeare. The present writing may be conceived as an introduction to his condensed survey. If the reader cares to settle the identity problem for himself, he should read Dr. Dover-Wilson's pages after he has read this book. The real, the essential Shakespeare will arise flooded with sunlight. The brush of the trained mind, tintured with authentic pigments, unconsciously painted the true picture. To make his masterful commentary the crowning chapter of this book, there is literally nothing to change in his lines except the few passages where he names the actor as the poet. The dispassionate critic will perceive, in this plain fact, the formidable argument against the tradition and for the heresy.

Page 253

10421 Pearsall Smith writes: 'Even the high priests of this established Shakespeare worship seem to betray, now and then, an uneasy consciousness of something equivocal about the object of their devotion, of things to be hushed up, and the need of whitewash.' "On Reading Shakespeare", p. 7.

The last edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, in its article on Shakespeare has the following lines of brazen cynicism: "In so far as evidence is to be twisted and strained at all it is right, in view of the long tradition and the *prima facie* presumptive evidence, to strain it in any possible direction which can reasonably make the Shakespearean authorship intelligible."

What sort of consideration may be attached to a historical contention whose partisans deem it right to *strain and twist* the evidence of it *in any possible direction* and which such dishonest expedients can not even be intelligible?

CHAPTER XV

Page 269

Lippomans' letter is given in *State Papers, Venetian*, VIII, 182, quoted by Mrs. Eva C. Clark.

Page 269

The recent researches of the late Father C. S. de Vere Beauclerk, Percy Allen, and other Oxfordians on the so-called Shakespeare portraits and their crowning confirmation by Wisner Barrell's X-ray and infra-red photographic experiments, are but a side issue to Rutland's authorship of the Shakespearean plays. It has been demonstrated by purely scientific technical methods that some of the alleged "Shakespeare" pictures treasured in public museums and private collections, are portraits of Edward de Vere, painted over so as to reproduce the features of the Droeshout engraving of the First Folio. This, undoubtedly, is a new element of evidence to show that Oxford had written under the same pen-name as Bacon, Rutland, and other contemporaries, such, for example, as the unknown authors of the seven spurious plays of the Third and Fourth Folios. But the startling discovery does not alter the facts or refute the arguments in our text. At the same time they constitute, unquestionably, fresh matter of contention between the Oxford theory, the orthodox

tradition of Stratford, and the ciphers and arguments of the Baconians the Ashburn portrait, now in the Shakespeare Folger Library in Washington the person painted, Shakspeare or Oxford, is holding an elegantly bound book. According to the orthodox expert, M. H. Spielman, this book is a missal or some other devotional volume, according to the Oxfordians, the book is Shakespeare's sugared Sonnets. Two comedies of the First Folio, parodying entirely, may have been written by Oxford. They are *Love's Labour's Lost* and *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. Both these plays, as shown in the text, are characteristically different from the master's usual matter and style. The actors in *Love's Labour's Lost* are pretty puppet princes and courtiers, Shakespeare's princes and courtiers are anything but marionettes. In *Merry Wives*, the actors are not aristocrats, but commoners, and precisely the type of commoners who never appear in the genuine Shakespeare comedies. There is in the play a suggestive line

Ford Av, and an ox too Both the proofs are extant

It is also the fact that *ipse* in the same scene between Touchstone, Audrey and William in *As You Like It* (V, 1) is the simple a—1, b—2, etc., cipher equivalent of *vere* or *de Vere*. Against that, the Oxfordians must explain the two characteristically *bourgeois* scenes in the two mentioned plays which contain obvious allusions to Bacon — the riddle, 'What is AB read backwards, with the horn on his head?' in *Love's Labour's Lost*, and Mistress Quickly's 'Hang hog is Latin for Bacon, I warrant you,' in *Merry Wives*.